

# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

## GALATIANS

### INTRODUCTION.

#### § 1. *The Situation of Galatia, and the Character of the People.*

GALATIA was a province of Asia Minor, having Pontus on the east, Bithynia and Paphlagonia north, Cappadocia and Phrygia south, and Phrygia west. See the map prefixed to the Acts of the Apostles. In Tanner's Classical Atlas, however, it extends on the north to the Euxine or Black sea. It was probably about two hundred miles in its greatest extent from east to west, and varied in breadth from twelve to an hundred and fifty miles. It was one of the largest provinces of Asia Minor, and covered an extent of country almost as large as the State of New Jersey. It is probable, however, that the boundaries of Galatia varied at different times as circumstances dictated. It had no *natural* boundary, except on the north; and of course the limits may have been varied by conquests, or by the will of the Roman emperor, when it was erected into a province.

The name *Galatia* is derived from the word *Gaul*, and was given to it because it had been conquered by the Gauls, who, having subdued the country, settled in it.—*Pausanias*, Attic. cap. iv. These were mixed with various Grecian families, and the country was also called *Gallogræcia*.—*Justin*, lib. xxiv. 4; xxv. 2; xxvii. 3. This invasion of Asia Minor was made, according to Justin (lib. xxv. cap. 2), about the four hundred and seventy-ninth year after the founding of Rome, and, of course, about 273 years before Christ. They invaded Macedonia and Greece; and subsequently invaded Asia Minor, and became an object of terror to all that region. This expedition issued from Gaul, passed over the Rhine, along the Danube, through Noricum, Pannonia, and Mœsia, and at its entrance into Germany, carried along with it many of the Tectosages. On their arrival in Thrace, Lutarius took them with him, crossed the Bosphorus, and effected the conquest of Asia Minor.—*Liv.* lib. xxxviii. c. 16. Such was their number, that Justin says, "they filled all Asia (*i. e.* all Asia Minor) like swarms of bees. Finally, they became so numerous that no kings of the east could engage in war without an army of Gauls; neither when driven from their kingdom could they flee to any other than to the Gauls. Such was the terror of the name of Gauls, and such the invincible felicity of their arms—*et armorum invicta felicitas erat*—that they supposed that in no other way could their own majesty be protected, or being lost, could be recovered, without the aid of Gallic courage. Their being

called in by the king of B'ithynia for aid, when they had gained the victory, they divided the kingdom with him, and called that region *Gallogræcia*."—Justin, xxv. 2. Under the reign of Augustus Cesar, about 26 years before the birth of Christ, this region was reduced into the form of a Roman colony, and was governed by a *proprætor*, appointed by the emperor.

Their original Gaulish language they retained so late as the fifth century, as appears from the testimony of Jerome, who says that their dialect was nearly the same as that of the Treviri.—Tom. iv. p. 256. ed. Benedict. At the same time, they also spoke the Greek language in common with all the inhabitants of Lesser Asia, and therefore the epistle to them was written in Greek, and was intelligible to them as well as to others.

The Galatians, like the inhabitants of the surrounding country, were heathens, and their religion was of a gross and debasing kind. They are said to have worshipped "the mother of the gods," under the name of *Agdistis*. Callimachus, in his hymns, calls them "a foolish people." And Hillary, himself a Gaul, calls them *Gallos indociles*—expressions which, says Calmet, may well excuse Paul's addressing them as "foolish," chap. iii. 1. There were few cities to be found among them, with the exception of Ancyra, Tavium, and Pessinus, which carried on some trade.

The possessors of Galatia were of three different nations or tribes of Gauls; the Tolistobogi, the Trocmi, and the Tectosagi. There are imperial medals extant, on which these names are found. It is of some importance to bear in mind these distinctions. It is possible that while Peter was making converts in one part of Galatia, the apostle Paul was in another; and that some, claiming authority as from Peter, propagated opinions not conformable to the views of Paul, to correct and expose which was one design of this epistle.—*Calmet*.

The Gauls are mentioned by ancient historians as a tall and valiant people. They went nearly naked. Their arms were only a sword and buckler. The impetuosity of their attack, it is said, was irresistible, and hence they became so formidable, and were usually so victorious.

It is not possible to ascertain the number of the inhabitants of Galatia, at the time when the gospel was preached there, or when this epistle was written. In 2 Macc. viii. 20, it is said that Judas Maccabeus, exhorting his followers to fight manfully against the Syrians, referred to several instances of divine interposition to encourage them; and among others, "he told them of the battle which they had in Babylon with the *Galatians*; how they came but eight thousand in all to the business, with four thousand Macedonians; and that the Macedonians being perplexed, the eight thousand destroyed an hundred and twenty thousand, because of the help which they had from heaven, and so received a great booty." But it is not certain that this refers to those who dwelt in Galatia. It may refer to *Gauls* who at that time had overrun Asia Minor; the Greek word here used, (Γαλάται) being taken equally for either. It is evident, however, that there was a large population that went under this general name; and it is probable that Galatia was thickly settled at the time when the gospel was preached there. It was in the central part of Asia Minor, then one of the most densely populated parts of the world, and was a region singularly fertile.—Strabo, lib. xii. p. 567, 568, ed. Casaub. Many persons, also, were attracted there for the sake of commerce. That there were many Jews also, in all the provinces of Asia Minor, is apparent not only from the Acts of the Apostles, but is expressly declared by Josephus, Ant. xvi. 6.

### § 2. *The time when the Gospel was preached in Galatia.*

There is no certain information as to the time when the gospel was first preached in Galatia, or the persons by whom it was done. There is mention, however, of Paul's having preached there several times, and several circum-

stances lead us to suppose that those churches were established by him, or that he was the first to carry the gospel to them, or that he and Barnabas together preached the gospel there on the *mission* on which they were sent from Antioch, Acts xiii. 2. seq. In Acts xvi. 5, 6, it is expressly said that they went "throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia." This journey was for the purpose of confirming the churches, and was undertaken at the suggestion of Paul (Acts xv. 36), with the design of visiting their brethren in every city where they had preached the word of the Lord. It is true, that in the account of the mission of Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiv.), it is not expressly said that they went into Galatia; but it is said (Acts xiv. 5, 6), that when they were in Iconium, an assault was made on them, or a purpose formed to stone them, and that, being apprized of it, they fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, "and unto the region that lieth round about." Pliny, lib. v. c. 27, says, that a part of Lycaonia bordered on Galatia, and contained fourteen cities, of which Iconium was the most celebrated. Phrygia also was contiguous to Galatia, and to Lycaonia, and these circumstances render it probable that when Paul proposed to Barnabas to visit again the churches where they had preached, Galatia was included, and that they had been there before this visit referred to in Acts xvi. 6.

It may be, also, that Paul refers to himself in the epistle (chap. i. 6), where he says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that CALLED you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel;" and if so, then it is plain that he preached to them first, and founded the churches there. The same thing may be evinced also from the expression in chap. iv. 15, where he says, "I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me;" an expression which leads us to suppose that they had formed for him a peculiar attachment, because he had first preached the gospel to them, and that there had existed all the ardour of attachment implied in their *first love*. It is quite evident, therefore, I think, that the gospel was preached among the Galatians first by Paul, either alone or in company with some other one of the apostles. It is possible, however, as has been intimated above, that Peter also may have preached in one part of Galatia at the time that Paul was preaching in other parts. It is a circumstance also of some importance on this point, that Paul speaks in this epistle in a tone of authority, and with a severity of reproof which he would hardly have used unless he had at first preached there, and had a right to be regarded as the founder of the church, and to address it as its father. In this respect the tone here is quite different, as Mr. Locke has remarked, from what is observable in the epistle to the Romans. Paul had not been at Rome when he addressed the church there by letter, and his language differs materially from that which occurs in the epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians. It was to them the very respectful and mild language of a stranger; here it is respectful, but it is the authoritative language of a father having a right to reprove.

### § 3. *The date of this Epistle.*

Many have supposed that this was the first epistle which Paul wrote. Tertullian maintained this (see Lardner, vol. vi. p. 7. ed. Lond. 1829), and Epiphanius also. Theodoret and others suppose it was written at Rome, and was consequently written near the close of the life of Paul, and was one of his last epistles. Lightfoot supposes also that it was written from Rome, and that it was among the first which Paul wrote there. Chrysostom says that this epistle was written before that to the Romans. Lewis Capellus, Witsius, and Wall suppose that it was written from Ephesus after the apostle had been a second time in Galatia. This also was the opinion of Pearson, who places it in the year 57, after the first epistle to the Corinthians, and before

Paul left Ephesus. Grotius thought it difficult to assign the date of the epistle, but conjectures that it was written about the same time as that to the Romans. Mill supposes that it was not written until after that to the Romans, probably at Troas, or some other place in Asia, as Paul was going to Jerusalem. He dates the epistle in the year 58. Dr. Benson supposes that it was written at Corinth, when the apostle was first there, and made a long stay of a year and six months. While there, he supposes that Paul received tidings of the instability of the converts in Galatia, and wrote this epistle and sent it by one of his assistants. See these opinions examined in Lardner as quoted above. Lardner himself supposes that it was written from Corinth about the year 52, or the beginning of the year 53. Macknight supposes it was written from Antioch, after the council at Jerusalem, and before Paul and Silas undertook the journey in which they delivered to the churches the decrees which were ordained at Jerusalem; Acts xvi. 4. Hug, in his Introduction, supposes that it was written at Ephesus in the year 57, and after the I. and II. Thess., and the epistle to Titus had been written. Mr. Locke supposes that Paul established churches in Galatia, in the year 51; and that this epistle was written between that time and the year 57. These opinions are mostly mere conjecture; and amidst such a variety of sentiment, it is evidently impossible to determine exactly at what time it was written. The only mark of time in the epistle itself occurs in chap. i. 6, where the apostle says, "I marvel that ye are *so soon* (*οὕτω ταχίως*) removed from him that called you," &c.; where the words "*so soon*" would lead us to suppose that it was at no distant period after he had been among them. Still it might have been several years. The date assigned to it in the Polyglott Bible (Bagster's) is the year 58.

The exact date of the epistle is of very little importance. In regard to the time when it was written the only arguments which seem to me to be of much weight, are those advanced by Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ*. "It will hardly be doubted," says he, "but that it was written whilst the dispute concerning the circumcision of Gentile converts was fresh in men's minds; for even supposing it to have been a forgery, the only credible motive that can be assigned for the forgery, was to bring the name and authority of the apostle into this controversy. No design can be so insipid, or so unlikely to enter into the thoughts of any man, as to produce an epistle written earnestly and pointedly on one side of a controversy, when the controversy itself was dead, and the question no longer interesting to any class of readers whatever. Now the controversy concerning the circumcision of Gentiles was of such a nature, that, if it arose at all, it must have arisen in the beginning of Christianity." Paley then goes on to show that it was natural that the Jews, and converts from the Jews, should start this question, and agitate it; and that this was much more likely to be insisted on while the temple was standing, and they continued as a nation, and sacrifices were offered, than after their city and temple were destroyed. It is therefore clear that the controversy must have been started, and the epistle written *before* the invasion of Judea, by Titus, and the destruction of Jerusalem. The *internal* evidence leads to this conclusion. On the whole, it is probable that the epistle was written somewhere about the year 53, or between that and 57; and was evidently designed to settle an important controversy in the churches of Galatia. The *place* where it was written, must be, I think, wholly a matter of conjecture. The subscription at the end that it was written from Rome is of no authority whatever; and there are no internal circumstances, which, so far as I can see, throw any light on the subject.

#### § 4. *The design of the Epistle.*

It is easy to discern from the epistle itself that the following circumstances



existed in the churches of Galatia, and that it was written with reference to them.

(1.) That they had been at first devotedly attached to the apostle Paul, and had received his commands and instructions with implicit confidence when he was among them; chap. iv. 14, 15; comp. chap. i. 6.

(2.) That they had been perverted from the doctrine which he taught them soon after he had left them; chap. i. 6.

(3.) That this had been done by persons who were of Jewish origin, and who insisted on the observance of the rites of the Jewish religion.

(4.) That they claimed to have come directly from Jerusalem, and to have derived their views of religion and their authority from the apostles there.

(5.) That they taught that the apostle Paul was inferior to the apostles there; that he had been called more recently into the apostolic office; that the apostles at Jerusalem must be regarded as the source of authority in the Christian church; and that, therefore, the teaching of Paul should yield to that which was derived directly from Jerusalem.

(6.) That the laws of Moses were binding, and were necessary in order to justification. That the rite of circumcision especially was of binding obligation; and it is probable (chap. vi. 12), that they had prevailed on many of the Galatians to be circumcised, and certain that they had induced them to observe the Jewish festivals; chap. iv. 10.

(7.) It would seem, also, that they urged that Paul himself had changed his views since he had been among the Galatians, and now maintained the necessity of circumcision; chap. v. 11. Perhaps they alleged this, from the undoubted fact that Paul, when at Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 26), had complied with some of the customs of the Jewish ritual.

(8.) That they urged that all the promises of God were made to Abraham, and that whoever would partake of those promises, must be circumcised as Abraham was. This Paul answers, chap. iii. 7; iv. 7.

(9.) That in consequence of the promulgation of these views, great dissensions had arisen in the church, and strifes of an unhappy nature existed, greatly contrary to the spirit which should be manifested by those who bore the Christian name.

From this description of the state of things in the churches of Galatia, the design of the epistle is apparent, and the scope of the argument will be easily seen. Of this state of things the apostle had been undoubtedly apprised, but whether by letters, or by messengers from the churches there, is not declared. It is not improbable, that some of his friends in the churches there had informed him of it, and he immediately set about a remedy to the evils existing there.

I. The first object, therefore, was to show that he had received his commission as an apostle, *directly from God*. He had not received it at all from man; he had not even been instructed by the other apostles; he had not acknowledged their superiority; he had not even consulted them. He did not acknowledge, therefore, that the apostles at Jerusalem possessed any superior rank or authority. His commission, though he had not seen the Lord Jesus before he was crucified, he had, nevertheless, derived immediately from him. The doctrine, therefore, which he had taught them, that the Mosaic laws were not binding, and that there was no necessity of being circumcised, was a doctrine which had been derived directly from God. In proof of this, he goes into an extended statement (chap. i.), of the manner in which he had been called, and of the fact; that he had not consulted with the apostles at Jerusalem, or confessed his inferiority to them; of the fact that when they had become acquainted with the manner in which he preached, they approved his course (chap. i. 24; ii. 1—10); and of the fact that on one occasion, he had actually been constrained to differ from Peter, the oldest of the apostles,

on a point in which he was manifestly wrong, and on one of the very points then under consideration.

II. The second great object, therefore, was to show the real nature and design of the law of Moses, and to prove that the peculiar rites of the Mosaic ritual, and especially the rite of circumcision, were not necessary to justification and salvation; and that they who observed that rite, did in fact renounce the Scripture method of justification; make the sacrifice of Christ of no value, and make slaves of themselves. This leads him into a consideration of the true nature of the doctrine of justification, and of the way of salvation by a Redeemer.

This point he shows in the following way,

(1.) By showing that those who lived before Christ, and especially Abraham, were in fact justified, not by obedience to the ritual law of Moses, but by faith in the promises of God; chap. iii. 1—18.

(2.) By showing that the design of the Mosaic ritual was only temporary, and that it was intended to lead to Christ; chap. iii. 19—29; iv. 1—8.

(3.) In view of this, he reproves the Galatians for having so readily fallen into the observance of these customs; chap. iv. 9—21.

(4.) This view of the design of the Mosaic law, and of its tendency, he illustrates by an allegory drawn from the case of Hagar; chap. iv. 21—31.

This whole discourse is succeeded by an affectionate exhortation to the Galatians, to avoid the evils which had been engendered; reproving them for the strifes existing in consequence of the attempt to introduce the Mosaic rites, and earnestly entreating them to stand firm in the liberty which Christ had vouchsafed to them from the servitude of the Mosaic institutions, chap. v. vi.

The design of the whole epistle, therefore, is to state and defend the true doctrine of justification, and to show that it did not depend on the observance of the laws of Moses. In the general purpose, therefore, it accords with the design of the epistle to the Romans. In one respect, however, it differs from the design of that epistle. That was written, to show that man could not be justified by *any works of the law*, or by conformity to *any* law, moral or ceremonial; the object of this is, to show that justification cannot be obtained by *conformity to the ritual or ceremonial law*; or that the observance of the ceremonial law is not necessary to salvation. In this respect, therefore, this epistle is of less general interest than that to the Romans. It is also, in some respects, more difficult. The argument, if I may so express myself, is more *Jewish*. It is more in the Jewish manner; is designed to meet a Jew in his own way, and is, therefore, somewhat more difficult for all to follow. Still it contains great and vital statements on the doctrines of salvation, and, as such, demands the profound and careful attention of all who desire to be saved, and who would know the way of acceptance with God

# EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

## CHAPTER I.

**PAUL**, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but <sup>a</sup> by Jesus

Christ, and God the Father, who <sup>b</sup> raised him from the dead ;)

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 9. 6, 15.

<sup>b</sup> Ac. 2. 24.

## CHAPTER I.

### ANALYSIS.

THE main design of Paul in this chapter, is to show that he had received his call to the apostleship, not from man, but from God. It had been alleged (see the Introduction above) that the apostles at Jerusalem possessed the most elevated rank, and the highest authority in the Christian church; that they were to be regarded as the fountains and the judges of the truth; that Paul was inferior to them as an apostle; and that they who inculcated the necessity of circumcision, and the observance of the rites of Moses, were sustained by the authority and the examples of the apostles at Jerusalem.

To meet this statement was the design of this first chapter. Paul's grand object was to show that he was not appointed by men; that he had not been commissioned by men; that he had not derived his instructions from men; that he had not even consulted with them; but that he had been commissioned and taught expressly by Jesus Christ, and that when the apostles at Jerusalem had become acquainted with him, and with his views and plans of labour, long after he had begun to preach, they had fully concurred with him. This argument comprises the following parts:

I. The solemn declaration that he was not commissioned by men, and that he was not, in any sense, an apostle of man, together with the general salutation to the churches in Galatia; ver. 1—5.

II. The expression of his astonish-

ment that the Galatians had so soon forsaken his instruction, and embraced another gospel; and a solemn declaration that whoever preached another gospel was to be held accursed; ver. 6—10. Twice he anathematizes those who attempt to declare any other way of justification than that which consisted in faith in Christ, and says that it was no gospel at all. It was to be held as a great and fixed principle, that there was but one way of salvation; and no matter who attempted to preach any other, he was to be held accursed.

III. To show, therefore, that *he* was not appointed by men, and that he had not received his instructions from men, but that he had preached the truth directly revealed to him by God, and that which was, therefore, immutable and eternal, he goes into a statement of the manner in which he was called into the ministry, and made acquainted with the gospel; ver. 11—24.

(a) He affirms, that he was not taught it by man, but by the express revelation of Jesus Christ; ver. 11, 12.

(b) He refers to his former well-known life, and his zeal in the Jewish religion; showing how much he had been formerly opposed to the gospel; ver. 13, 14.

(c) He says that he had been separated, by the divine purpose, from his mother's womb, to be a preacher of the gospel, and that when he was called to the ministry, he had no conference with any human being, as to what he was to preach; he did not go up to Jerusalem to consult with those who were older apostles, but he retired far from them into Arabia, and

thence again returned to Damascus ; ver. 15—17.

(d) After three years, he says, he did indeed go to Jerusalem ; but he remained there but fifteen days, and saw none of the apostles but Peter and James ; ver. 18, 19. His views of the gospel were formed before that ; and that he did not submit implicitly to Peter, and learn of him, he shows in ch. ii., where he says, he "withstood him to the face."

(e) After that, he says, he departed into the regions of Cilicia, in Asia Minor, and had no opportunity of conference with the churches which were in Judea. Yet they heard that he who had been formerly a persecutor, had become a preacher, and they glorified God for it ; ver. 20—24. Of course, he had had no opportunity of deriving his views of religion from them ; he had been in no sense dependent on them ; but so far as they were acquainted with his views, they concurred in them. The sum of the argument, therefore, in this chapter is, that when Paul went into Cilicia and the adjacent regions, he had never seen but two of the apostles, and that but for a short time ; he had never seen the apostles together ; and he had never received any instructions from them. His views of the gospel, which he had imparted to the Galatians, he had derived directly from God.

1. *Paul an apostle* ; see Note, Rom. i. 1. This is the usual form in which he commences his epistles ; and it was of special importance to commence this epistle in this manner, because it was one design to vindicate his apostleship, or to show that he had received his commission directly from the Lord Jesus. ¶ *Not of men.* "*Not from (ἀπὸ) men.*" That is, he was not from any body of men, or commissioned by men. The word apostle means *sent*, and Paul means to say, that he was not *sent* to execute any purpose of men, or commissioned by them. His was a higher calling ; a calling of God, and he had been sent directly by him. Of course, he means to exclude here all classes of men as having had any thing to do in sending

him forth ; and, especially, he means to affirm, that he had not been sent out by the body of apostles at Jerusalem. This, it will be remembered (see the Introduction), was one of the charges of those who had perverted the Galatians from the faith which Paul had preached to them. ¶ *Neither by man.* "*Neither by or through (διὰ) the instrumentality of any man.*" Here he designs to exclude all men from having had any agency in his appointment to the apostolic office. He was neither sent out from any body of men to execute their purposes ; nor did he receive his commission, authority, or ordination through the medium of any man. A minister of the gospel now receives his call from God, but he is ordained or set apart to his office by man. Matthias, the apostle chosen in the place of Judas (Acts i. 26), received his call from God, but it was by the vote of the body of the apostles. Timothy was also called of God, but he was appointed to his office by the laying on the hands of the presbytery ; 1 Tim. iv. 14. But Paul here says, that *he* received no such commission as that from the apostles. They were not the means or the medium of ordaining him to his work. He had, indeed, together with Barnabas, been set apart at Antioch, by the brethren there (Acts xiii. 1—3), for a *special mission* in Asia Minor ; but this was not an appointment to the apostleship. He had been restored to sight after the miraculous blindness produced by seeing the Lord Jesus on the way to Damascus, by the laying on of the hands of Ananias, and had received important instruction from him (Acts ix. 17), but his commission as an apostle had been received directly from the Lord Jesus, without any intervening medium, or any form of human authority, Acts ix. 15 ; xxii. 17—21 ; 1 Cor. ix. 1. ¶ *But by Jesus Christ.* That is, directly by Christ. He had been called by him, and commissioned by him, and sent by him, to engage in the work of the gospel. ¶ *And God the Father.* These words were omitted by Marcion, because, says Jerome he

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia : <sup>a</sup>

3 Grace <sup>b</sup> be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 16.6; 18.23.

<sup>b</sup> Ro. 1.7, &c.

held that Christ raised himself from the dead. But there is no authority for omitting them. The sense is, that he had the highest possible authority for the office of an apostle; he had been called to it by God himself, who had raised up the Redeemer. It is remarkable here, that Paul associates Jesus Christ and God the Father, as having called and commissioned him. We may ask here, of one who should deny the divinity of Christ, how Paul could mention him as being equal with God in the work of commissioning him? We may further ask, how could he say that he had not received his call to this office from a man, if Jesus Christ was a mere man? That he *was* called by Christ, he expressly says, and strenuously maintains as a point of great importance. And yet, the very point and drift of his argument is, to show that he was not called by *man*. How could this be if Christ was a mere man? ¶ *Who raised him from the dead*; see Notes on Acts ii. 24, 32. It is not quite clear, why Paul introduces this circumstance here. It may have been, (1.) Because his mind was full of it, and he wished on all occasions to make that fact prominent; (2.) Because this was the distinguishing feature of the Christian religion, that the Lord Jesus had been raised up from the dead, and he wished, in the outset, to present the superiority of that religion which had brought life and immortality to light; and, (3.) Because he wished to show that he had received his commission from that same God who had raised up Jesus, and who was, therefore, the author of the true religion. His commission was from the source of life and light, the God of the living and the dead; the God who was the author of the glorious scheme which revealed life and immortality.

4 Who gave <sup>c</sup> himself for our sins, that he might deliver us <sup>d</sup> from this present evil <sup>e</sup> world, according <sup>f</sup> to the will of God and our Father:

<sup>c</sup> John 10.17,18; Tit. 2.14.

<sup>d</sup> John 17.14.

<sup>e</sup> 1 John 2.16.

<sup>f</sup> Ro. 8.27.

2. *And all the brethren which are with me.* It was usual for Paul to associate with him the ministers of the gospel, or other Christians who were with him, in expressing friendly salutations to the churches to which he wrote, or as uniting with him, and concurring in the sentiments which he expressed. Though Paul claimed to be inspired, yet it would do much to conciliate favour for what he advanced, if others also concurred with what he said, and especially if they were known to the churches to which the epistles were written. Sometimes the names of others were associated with his in the epistle; see Note, 1 Cor. i. 1; Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1; 1 Thess. i. 1. As we do not know where this epistle was written, of course we are ignorant who the "brethren" were, who are here referred to. They may have been ministers with Paul, or they may have been the private members of the churches. Commentators have been much divided in opinion on the subject; but all is conjecture. It is obviously impossible to determine. ¶ *Unto the churches.* How many churches there were in Galatia, is unknown. There were several *cities* in Galatia, as Ancyria, Tavia, Pessinus, &c. It is not improbable that a church had been established in each of the cities, and as they were not far distant from each other, and the people had the same general character and habits, it is not improbable that they had fallen into the same errors. Hence the epistle is directed to them in common.

3. *Grace be unto you, &c.* This is the usual apostolic salutation, imploring for them the blessing of God. See it fully explained in the Notes on Rom. i. 7.

4. *Who gave himself for our sins.* The reason why Paul so soon introduces this important doctrine, and

makes it here so prominent, probably is, that this was the cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion, the great truth which was ever to be kept before the mind, and because this truth had been in fact lost sight of by them. They had embraced doctrines which tended to obscure it, or to make it void. They had been led into error by the Judaizing teachers, who held that it was necessary to be circumcised, and to conform to the whole Jewish ritual. Yet the tendency of all this was to obscure the doctrines of the gospel, and particularly the great truth that men can be justified only by faith in the blood of Jesus; chap. v. 4; comp. chap. i. 6, 7. Paul, therefore, wished to make this prominent—the very *starting point* in their religion; a truth never to be forgotten, that Christ gave himself for their sins, that he might deliver them from all the bad influences of this world, and from all the false systems of religion engendered in this world. The expression “*who gave*” (τοῦ δόντος) is one that often occurs in relation to the work of the Redeemer, where it is represented as a *gift*, either on the part of God, or on the part of Christ himself; see Note on John iii. 16; comp. John iv. 10; Rom. iv. 25; 2 Cor. ix. 15; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 25; Tit. ii. 14. This passage proves, (1.) That it was wholly *voluntary* on the part of the Lord Jesus. No one compelled him to come; no one could compel him. It is not too much to say, that God *could* not, and *would* not COMPEL any innocent and holy being to undertake the great work of the atonement, and endure the bitter sorrows which were necessary to redeem man. God will *compel* the guilty to suffer, but he never will compel the innocent to endure sorrows, even in behalf of others. The whole work of redemption must be *voluntary*, or it could not be performed. (2.) It evinced great benevolence on the part of the Redeemer. He did not come to take upon himself unknown and unsurveyed woes. He did not go to work in the dark. He knew what was to be done. He knew just what sorrows were to be endured—how long,

how keen, how awful. And yet, knowing this, he came resolved and prepared to endure all those woes, and to drink the bitter cup to the dregs. (3.) If there had not been this benevolence in his bosom, man must have perished for ever. He could not have saved himself; and he had no power or right to compel another to suffer in his behalf; and even God would not lay this mighty burden on any other, unless he was entirely willing to endure it. How much then do we owe to the Lord Jesus; and how entirely should we devote our lives to him who loved us, and gave himself for us. The word *himself*, is rendered by the Syriac, *his life* (Nūphsh); and this is in fact the sense of the Greek, that he gave his *life* for our sins, or that he died in our stead. He gave his *life* up to toil, tears, privation, sorrow, and death, that he might redeem us. The phrase, “*for our sins*” (ὕπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν), means the same as *on account of*; meaning, that the cause or reason why he gave himself to death, was our sins; that is, he died because we are sinners, and because we could be saved only by his giving himself up to death. Many MSS. instead of ὑπὲρ, here read περὶ, but the sense is not materially varied. The Syriac translates it, “*who gave himself instead of*,” by a word denoting that there was a *substitution* of the Redeemer in our place. The sense is, that the Lord Jesus became a vicarious offering, and died in the stead of sinners. It is not possible to express this idea more distinctly and unambiguously than Paul has done, in this passage. Sin was the procuring cause of his death; to make expiation for sin was the design of his coming; and sin is pardoned and removed only by his substituted suffering. ¶ *That he might deliver us*. The word here used (ἐξέλται) properly means, to pluck out, to tear out; to take out from a number, to select; then to rescue or deliver. This is the sense here. He came and gave himself that he might *rescue* or *deliver* us from this present evil world. It does not mean to take away by death, or to remove to another world, but that he might

5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

6 I marvel that ye are so soon

effect a separation between us and what the apostle calls here, "this present evil world." The grand purpose was, to rescue sinners from the dominion of this world, and separate them unto God. ¶ *This present evil world*; see John xvii. 15, 16. Locke supposes, that by this phrase is intended the Jewish institutions, or the Mosaiical age, in contradistinction from the age of the Messiah. Bloomfield supposes, that it means "the present state of being, this life, filled as it is with calamity, sin, and sorrow; or, rather, the *sin itself*, and the misery consequent upon it." Rosenmüller understands by it, "the men of this age, Jews, who reject the Messiah; and Pagans, who are devoted to idolatry and crime." The word rendered *world* (*αἰὼν*), means properly *age*, an indefinitely long period of time; then eternity, for ever. It then comes to mean the world, either present or future; and then the present world, as it is, with its cares, temptations, and desires; the idea of evil, physical and moral, being everywhere implied. —*Robinson, Lex.*; Mat. xiii. 22; Luke xvi. 8; xx. 34; Rom. xii. 2. Here it means the world as it is, without religion, a world of bad passions, false opinions, corrupt desires; a world full of ambition, and of the love of pleasure, and of gold; a world where God is not loved or obeyed; a world where men are regardless of right, and truth, and duty; where they live for themselves, and not for God; in short, that great community, which in the Scriptures is called *the world*, in contradistinction from the kingdom of God. That world, that evil world, is full of sin; and the object of the Redeemer was to *deliver* us from that; that is, to effect a separation between his followers and that. It follows, therefore, that his followers constitute a peculiar community, not governed by the prevailing maxims, or influenced by the peculiar feelings of the people of this world.

removed "from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel;

a chap. 5. 4, 7, 8.

And it follows, also, that if there is not *in fact* such a separation, then the purpose of the Redeemer's death, in regard to us, has not been effected, and we are still a part of that great and ungodly community, *the world*. ¶ *According to the will of God, &c.* Not by the will of man, or by his wisdom, but in accordance with the will of God. It was his purpose that the Lord Jesus should thus give himself; and his doing it was in accordance with his will, and was pleasing in his sight. The whole plan originated in the divine purpose, and has been executed in accordance with the divine will. If in accordance with *his* will, it is good, and is worthy of universal acceptance.

5. *To whom be glory, &c.* Let him have all the praise and honour of the plan and its execution. It is not uncommon for Paul to introduce an ascription of praise in the midst of an argument: see Note on Rom. i. 25. It results from the strong desire which he had, that all the glory should be given to God, and showed that he believed that all blessings had their origin in him, and that he should be always acknowledged.

6. *I marvel.* I wonder. It is remarked by Luther (Comm. in loco), that Paul here uses as mild a word as possible. He does not employ the language of severe reproof, but he expresses his astonishment that the thing should have occurred. He was deeply affected and amazed, that such a thing could have happened. They had cordially embraced the gospel; they had manifested the tenderest attachment for him; they had given themselves to God, and yet in a very short time they had been led wholly astray, and had embraced opinions which tended wholly to pervert and destroy the gospel. They had shown an instability and inconstancy of character, which was to him, perfectly surprising. ¶ *That ye are so soon.* This proves that the epistle was written not long

after the gospel was first preached to them. According to the general supposition, it could not have been more than from two to five years. Had it been a long and gradual decline; had they been destitute for years of the privileges of the gospel; or had they had time to forget him who had first preached to them, it would not have been a matter of surprise. But when it occurred in a few months; when their once ardent love for Paul, and their confidence in him had so soon vanished, or their affections become alienated, and when they had so soon embraced opinions tending to set the whole gospel aside, it could not but excite his wonder. Learn hence, that men, professedly pious, and apparently ardently attached to the gospel, may become soon perverted in their views, and alienated from those who had called them into the gospel, and whom they professed tenderly to love. The ardour of the affections becomes cool, and some artful, and zealous, and plausible teachers of error seduce the mind, corrupt the heart, and alienate the affections. Where there is the ardour of the first love to God, there is also an effort soon made by the adversary, to turn away the heart from him; and young converts are commonly soon attacked in some plausible manner, and by art and arguments adapted to turn away their minds from the truth, and to alienate the affections from God. ¶ *So soon removed.* This also, Luther remarks, is a mild and gentle term. It implies that *foreign* influence had been used, to turn away their minds from the truth. The word here used (*μετατίθεσι*) means, to transpose, put in another place; and then, to go over from one party to another. Their affections had become transferred to other doctrines than those which they had at first embraced, and they had moved off from the only true foundation, to one which would give them no support. ¶ *From him that called you.* There has been great difference of opinion in regard to the sense of this passage. Some have supposed, that it refers to God; others to Christ; others to Paul himself. Either sup-

position makes good sense, and conveys an idea not contrary to the Scriptures in other places. Doddridge, Chandler, Clarke, Macknight, Locke, and some others refer it to Paul; Rosenmüller, Koppe, and others, suppose it refers to God; and others refer it to the Redeemer. The Syriac renders it thus: "I marvel that ye are so soon turned away from that Messiah (Christ) who has called you." &c. It is not possible, perhaps, to determine the true sense. It does not seem to me to refer to Paul, as the main object of the epistle is, not to show that they had removed from him, but from the *gospel*—a far more grievous offence; and it seems to me that it is to be referred to God. The reasons are, (1.) That he who had called them, is said to have called them "into the grace of Christ," which would be hardly said of Christ himself; and, (2.) That the work of calling men is usually in the Scriptures attributed to God; 1 Thess. ii. 12; v. 24; 2 Thess. ii. 14; 2 Tim. i. 9. ¶ *Into the grace of Christ.* Locke renders this, "into the covenant of grace which is by Christ." Doddridge understands it of the method of salvation which is *by or through* the grace of Christ. There is no doubt that it refers to the plan of salvation which is by Christ, or in Christ; and the main idea is, that the scheme of salvation which they had embraced under his instruction, was one which contemplated salvation only by the grace or favour of Christ; and that from that they had been removed to another scheme, essentially different, where the grace of Christ was made useless and void. It is Paul's object to show that the true plan makes Christ the great and prominent object; and that the plan which they had embraced was in this respect wholly different. ¶ *Unto another gospel.* A gospel which destroys the grace of Christ; which proclaims salvation on other terms than simple dependence on the merits of the Lord Jesus; and which has introduced the Jewish rites and ceremonies as essential, in order to obtain salvation. The apostle calls that scheme the *gospel*.



7 Which <sup>a</sup> is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert <sup>b</sup> the gospel of Christ.

8 But though we, or an angel

<sup>a</sup> 2 Co. 11.4.

<sup>b</sup> Ac. 15.1,24; 2 Co. 2.17;

because it pretended to be; it was preached by those who claimed to be preachers of the gospel; who alleged that they had come direct from the apostles at Jerusalem, and who pretended to declare the method of salvation. It claimed to be the gospel, and yet it was essentially unlike the plan which he had preached as constituting the gospel. That which he preached, inculcated the entire dependence of the sinner on the merits and grace of Christ; that system had introduced dependence on the observance of the rites of the Mosaic system, as necessary to salvation.

7. *Which is not another.* There is also a great variety of views in regard to the meaning of this expression. Tindal translates it, "which is nothing else but there be some that trouble you." Locke, "which is not owing to any thing else but only this, that ye are troubled with a certain sort of men who would overturn the gospel of Christ." But Rosenmüller, Koppe, Bloomfield, and others, give a different view; and according to them the sense is, "which, however, is not another gospel, nor indeed the gospel at all, or true," &c. According to this, the design was to state, that what they taught had none of the elements or characteristics of the gospel. It was a different system, and one which taught an entirely different method of justification before God. It seems to me that this is the true sense of the passage, and that Paul means to teach them that the system, though it was called the gospel, was essentially different from that which he had taught, and which consisted in simple reliance on Christ for salvation. The system which *they* taught, was in fact the Mosaic system; the Jewish mode, depending on the rites and ceremonies of religion; and which, therefore, did not deserve to be called the *gospel*. It would load them again with burden-

from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let <sup>c</sup> him be accursed.

chap. 5.10,12.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Co. 16.22.

some rites, and with cumbrous institutions, from which it was the great purpose of the gospel to relieve them. ¶ *But there be some that trouble you.* Though this is most manifestly another system, and not the gospel at all, yet there are some persons who are capable of giving trouble and of unsettling your minds, by making it plausible. They pretend that they have come direct from the apostles at Jerusalem; that they have received their instructions from them, and that they preach the true gospel as they teach it. They pretend that Paul was called into the office of an apostle after them; that he had never seen the Lord Jesus; that he had derived his information only from others; and thus they are able to present a plausible argument, and to unsettle the minds of the Galatians. ¶ *And would prevent.* That is, the tendency of their doctrine is wholly to *turn away* (*μισεργεισαι*), to destroy, or render useless the gospel of Christ. It would lead to the denial of the necessity of dependence on the merits of the Lord Jesus for salvation, and would substitute dependence on rites and ceremonies. This does not of necessity mean that such was the *design* of their teaching, for they might have been in the main honest; but that such was the *tendency* and *result* of their teaching. It would lead men to *rely* on the Mosaic rites for salvation.

8. *But though we.* That is, we too apostles. Probably, he refers particularly to himself, as the plural is often used by Paul when speaking of himself. He alludes here, possibly, to a charge which was brought against him by the false teachers in Galatia, that he had changed his views since he came among them, and now preached differently from what he did then; see the Introduction. They endeavoured probably to fortify their own opinions in regard to the obligations of the

Mosaic law, by affirming, that though Paul when he was among them had maintained that the observance of the law was not necessary to salvation, yet that he had changed his views, and now held the same doctrine on the subject which they did. What they relied on in support of this opinion is unknown. It is certain, however, that Paul *did*, on some occasions (see Note on Acts xxi. 21—26), comply with the Jewish rites, and it is not improbable that they were acquainted with that fact, and interpreted it as proving that he had changed his sentiments on the subject. At all events, it would make their allegation plausible that Paul was *now* in favour of the observance of the Jewish rites, and that if he had ever taught differently, he must now have changed his opinion. Paul therefore begins the discussion by denying this in the most solemn manner. He affirms that the gospel which he had at first preached to them was the true gospel. It contained the great doctrines of salvation. It was to be regarded by them as a fixed and settled point, that there was no other way of salvation but by the merits of the Saviour. No matter who taught any thing else; no matter though it be alleged that he had changed his mind; no matter even though he *should* preach another gospel; and no matter though an angel from heaven should declare any other mode of salvation, it was to be held as a fixed and settled position, that the true gospel had been preached to them at first. We are not to suppose that Paul admitted that he had changed his mind, or that the inferences of the false teachers there were well-founded, but we are to understand this as affirming in the most solemn manner that the true gospel, and the only method of salvation, had been preached among them at first. ¶ *Or an angel from heaven.* This is a very strong rhetorical mode of expression. It is not to be supposed that an angel from heaven would preach any other than the true gospel. But Paul wishes to put the strongest possible case, and to affirm in the strongest manner possible, that the

true gospel had been preached to them. The great system of salvation had been taught; and no other was to be admitted, no matter who preached it; no matter what the character or rank of the preacher: and no matter with what imposing claims he came. It follows from this, that the mere rank, character, talent, eloquence, or piety of a preacher does not of necessity give his doctrine a claim to our belief, or prove that his gospel is true. Great talents may be prostituted; and great sanctity of manner, and even holiness of character, may be in error; and no matter what may be the rank, and talents, and eloquence, and piety of the preacher, if he does not accord with the gospel which was first preached, he is to be held accursed. ¶ *Preach any other gospel, &c.*; see Note on ver. 6. Any gospel that differs from that which was first preached to you, any system of doctrines which goes to deny the necessity of simple dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. ¶ *Let him be accursed.* Gr. ἀνάθεμα (*anathema*). On the meaning of this word, see Notes on 1 Cor. xii. 3; xvi. 22. It is not improperly here rendered “accursed,” or “devoted to destruction.” The object of Paul is to express the greatest possible abhorrence of any other doctrine than that which he had himself preached. So great was his detestation of it, that, says Luther, “he casteth out very flames of fire, and his zeal is so fervent, that he beginneth almost to curse the angels.” It follows from this, (1.) That any other doctrine than that which is proclaimed in the Bible on the subject of justification, is to be rejected and treated with abhorrence, no matter what the rank, talent, or eloquence of him who defends it. (2.) That we are not to patronise or countenance such preachers. No matter what their zeal or their apparent sincerity, or their apparent sanctity, or their apparent success, or their real boldness in rebuking vice, we are to withdraw from them. “Cease, my son,” said Solomon, “to hear the instruction that causes to err from the words of know-

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other <sup>a</sup> gospel unto you than

<sup>a</sup> De.4.2; Re.22.18.

ledge; Prov. xix. 27. Especially are we to withdraw wholly from that instruction which goes to deny the great doctrines of salvation; that pure gospel which the Lord Jesus and the apostle taught. If Paul would regard even an angel as doomed to destruction, and as held accursed, should he preach any other doctrine, assuredly *we* should not be found to lend our countenance to it, nor should we patronise it by attending on such a ministry. Who would desire to attend on the ministry of even an angel if he was to be held accursed? How much less the ministry of a man preaching the same doctrine!—It does not follow from this, however, that we are to treat others with severity of language or with the language of *cursing*. They must answer to God. *We* are to withdraw from their teaching; we are to regard the *doctrines* with abhorrence; and we are not to lend our countenance to them. To their own master they stand or fall; but what *must* be the doom of a teacher whom an inspired man has said should be regarded as “ACCURSED!”—It may be added, how responsible is the ministerial office! How fearful the account which the ministers of religion must render! How much prayer, and study, and effort are needed that they may be able to understand the true gospel, and that they may not be led into error, or lead others into error.

9. *As we said before.* That is, in the previous verse. It is equivalent to saying, “as I have just said;” see 2 Cor. vii. 3. It cannot be supposed that he had said this when he was with them, as it cannot be believed that he then anticipated that his doctrines would be perverted, and that another gospel would be preached to them. The sentiment of ver. 8 is here repeated on account of its importance. It is common in the scriptures, as indeed it is everywhere else, to *repeat* a declaration in order to deepen the impression of its importance and its

that ye have received, let him be accursed.

10 For do I now persuade

truth. Paul would not be misunderstood on this point. He would leave no doubt as to his meaning. He would not have it supposed that he had uttered the sentiment in ver. 8 hastily; and he therefore repeats it with emphasis. ¶ *Than that ye have received.* In the previous verse, it is, “that which we have preached.” By this change in the phraseology he designs, probably, to remind them that they had once solemnly professed to embrace that system. It had not only been *preached* to them, it had been *embraced* by them. The teachers of the new system, therefore, were really in opposition to the once avowed sentiments of the Galatians; to what they knew to be true. They were not only to be held accursed, therefore, because Paul so declared, but because they preached what the Galatians themselves knew to be false, or what was contrary to that which they had themselves professed to be true.

10. *For do I now persuade men, or God?* The word “now” (ἄρτι) is used here, evidently, to express a contrast between his present and his former purpose of life. Before his conversion to Christianity, he impliedly admits, that it *was* his object to conciliate the favour of men; that he derived his authority from them (Acts ix. 1, 2); that he endeavoured to act so as to please them and gain their good esteem. But *now* he says, this was not his object. He had a higher aim. It was to please God, and to conciliate his favour. The object of this verse is obscure; but it seems to me to be connected with what follows, and to be designed to introduce that by showing that he had not *now* received his commission from men, but had received it from God. *Perhaps* there may be an allusion to an implied allegation in regard to him. It *may* have been alleged (see Notes on the previous verses) that even *he* had changed his mind, and was now himself an observer of the laws of Moses

men, or God? or do I seek <sup>a</sup> to please men? for if I yet pleased

<sup>a</sup> 2 Co. 12. 19; 1 Th. 2. 4.

To this, perhaps, he replies, by this question, that such conduct would not have been inconsistent in his view, when it was his main purpose to please *men*, and when he derived his commission from them; but that *now* he had a higher aim. His purpose was to please God; and he was not aiming in any way to gratify men. The word which is rendered "persuade" here (πειθω), has been very variously interpreted. Tindal renders it, "seek now the favour of men or of God?" Doddridge: "Do I now solicit the favour of men or of God?" This also is the interpretation of Grotius, Hammond, Elsner, Koppe, Rosenmüller, Bloomfield, &c. and is undoubtedly the true explanation. The word properly means to *persuade*, or to *convince*; Acts xviii. 4; xxviii. 23; 2 Cor. v. 11. But it also means, to bring over to kind feelings, to conciliate, to pacify, to quiet. Sept. 1 Sam. xxiv. 8; 2 Macc. iv. 25; Acts xii. 20; 1 John iii. 19. By the *question* here, Paul means to say, that his great object was now to *please God*. He desired his favour rather than the favour of man. He acted with reference to his will. He derived his authority from him, and not from the Sanhedrim or any earthly council. And the purpose of all this is to say, that he had not received his commission to preach from man, but had received it directly from God. ¶ *Or do I seek to please men?* It is not my aim or purpose to please men, and to conciliate their favour; comp. 1 Thess. ii. 4. ¶ *For if I yet pleased men.* If I made it my aim to please men; if this was the regulating principle of my conduct. The word "*yet*" here (ἔτι) has reference to his former purpose. It implies that this had once been his aim. But he says if he had *pursued* that purpose to please men; if this had *continued* to be the aim of his life, he would not *now* have been a servant of Christ. He had been constrained to *abandon* that purpose in order that he might be a servant of

men, I should not <sup>b</sup> be the servant of Christ.

<sup>b</sup> Ja. 4. 4.

Christ; and the sentiment is, that in order that a man may become a Christian, it is necessary for him to abandon the purpose of pleasing men as the rule of his life. It may be implied also that if *in fact* a man makes it his aim to please men, or if this is the purpose for which he lives and acts, and if he shapes his conduct with reference to that, he cannot be a Christian or a servant of Christ. A Christian *must* act from higher motives than those, and he who aims supremely at the favour of his fellow-men has full evidence that he is not a Christian. A friend of Christ must do his duty, and must regulate his conduct by the will of God, whether men are pleased with it or not. And it may be further implied that the life and deportment of a sincere Christian *will not* please men. It is not that which they love. A holy, humble, spiritual life they do not love. It is true, indeed, that their consciences tell them that such a life is right; that they are often constrained to speak well of the life of Christians, and to commend it; it is true that they are constrained to respect a man who is a sincere Christian, and that they often repose confidence in such a man; and it is true also that they often speak with respect of them when they are dead; but the life of an humble, devoted, and zealous Christian they do not *love*. It is contrary to their views of life. And especially if a Christian so lives and acts as to reprove them either by his words or by his life; or if a Christian makes his religion so prominent as to interfere with their pursuits or pleasures, they do not love it. It follows from this, (1.) That a Christian is not to *expect* to please men. He must not be disappointed, therefore, if he does not. His Master did not please the world; and it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master. (2.) A professing Christian, and especially a minister, should be alarmed when the world flatters and caresses him. He

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me, is not after man.

a 1 Co. 15.1—3

should fear either, (a) That he is not living as he ought to do, and that sinners love him *because* he is so much like them, and keeps them in countenance; or, (b) That they *mean* to make him betray his religion and become conformed to them. It is a great point gained for the gay world, when it can, by its caresses and attentions, get a Christian to forsake a prayer-meeting for a party, or surrender his deep spirituality to engage in some political project. "Woe unto you," said the Redeemer, "when all men speak well of you," Luke vi. 26. (3.) One of the main differences between Christians and the world is, that others *aim* to please men; the Christian *aims* to please God. And this is a *great* difference. (4.) It follows that if men would become Christians, they must cease to make it their object to please men. They must be willing to be met with contempt and a frown; they must be willing to be persecuted and despised; they must be willing to lay aside all hope of the praise and the flattery of men, and be content with an honest effort to please God. (5.) True Christians must differ from the world. Their aims, feelings, purposes must be unlike the world. They are *to be* a peculiar people; and they should be willing to be esteemed such. It does not follow, however, that a true Christian should not desire the good esteem of the world, or that he should be indifferent to an honourable reputation (1 Tim. iii. 7); nor does it follow that a consistent Christian will not often command the respect of the world. In times of trial, the world will repose confidence in Christians; when any work of benevolence is to be done, the world will instinctively look to Christians; and notwithstanding sinners will not *love* religion, yet they will secretly feel assured that some of the brightest ornaments of society are Christians, and that they have a *claim* to the confidence and esteem of their

12 For<sup>a</sup> I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation<sup>b</sup> of Jesus Christ.

b Ep. 3.3.

fellow-men. ¶ *The servant of Christ. A Christian.*

11. *But I certify you.* I make known to you; or, I declare to you; see 1 Cor. xv. 1. Doubtless this had been known to them before, but he now assures them of it, and goes into an extended illustration to show them that he had not received his authority from man to preach the gospel. To state and prove this is the main design of this chapter. ¶ *Is not after man.* Gr. Not according to man; see ver. 1. That is, he was not appointed by man, nor had he any human instructor to make known to him what the gospel was. He had neither received it from man, nor had it been debased or adulterated by any human admixtures. He had received it directly from the Lord Jesus.

12. *For I neither received it of man.* This is very probably said in reply to his opponents, who had maintained that Paul had derived his knowledge of the gospel from other men, as he had not been personally known to the Lord Jesus, or been of the number of those whom he called to be his apostles. In reply to this, he says, that he did not receive his gospel in any way from man. ¶ *Neither was I taught it.* That is, by man. He was not taught it by any written account of it, or by the instruction of man in any way. The only plausible objection to this statement which could be urged would be the fact that Paul had an interview with Ananias (Acts ix. 17) before his baptism, and that he would probably receive instructions from him. But to this it may be replied, (1.) That there is no evidence that Ananias went into an explanation of the nature of the Christian religion in his interview with Paul; (2.) Paul had *before* this been taught what Christianity was by his interview with the Lord Jesus on the way to Damascus (Acts ix. 5; xxvi. 14—18); (3.) The purpose for which Ananias

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond

measure I persecuted the church <sup>a</sup> of God, and wasted it.

14 And profited in the Jews'

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 8. 1, 3; 9. 1, 2; 26. 9.

was sent to him in Damascus was that he might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, Acts ix. 17. Whatever instructions he may have received through Ananias, it is still true that his call was *directly* from the Lord Jesus, and his information of the nature of Christianity from *his* revelation. ¶ *But by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* On his way to Damascus, and subsequently in the temple, Acts xxii. 17—21. Doubtless he received communications at various times from the Lord Jesus with regard to the nature of the gospel and his duty. The sense here is, that he was not indebted to *men* for his knowledge of the gospel, but had derived it entirely from the Saviour.

13. *For ye have heard of my conversation.* My conduct, my mode of life, my deportment; see Note on 2 Cor. i. 12. Probably Paul had himself made them acquainted with the events of his early years. The *reason* why he refers to this is, to show them that he had not derived his knowledge of the Christian religion from any instruction which he had received in his early years, or any acquaintance which he had formed with the apostles. He had at first been decidedly opposed to the Lord Jesus, and had been converted only by his wonderful grace. ¶ *In the Jews' religion.* In the belief and practice of *Judaism*; that is, as it was understood in the time when he was educated. It was not merely in the religion of Moses, but it was in that religion as understood and practised by the Jews in his time, when opposition to Christianity constituted a very material part of it. In *that* religion Paul proceeds to show that he had been more distinguished than most persons of his time. ¶ *How that beyond measure.* In the highest possible degree; beyond all limits or bounds; exceedingly. The phrase which Paul here uses (κατ' ὑπερβολήν), *by hyperbole*, is one which he frequently employs to denote any thing

that is *excessive*, or that cannot be expressed by ordinary language; see the Greek in Rom. vii. 13; 1 Cor. xii. 31; 2 Cor. i. 8; iv. 7, 17. ¶ *I persecuted the church*; see Acts viii. 3; ix. 1, seq. ¶ *And wasted it.* Destroyed it. The word which is here used, means properly to waste or destroy, as when a city or country is ravaged by an army or by wild beasts. His *purpose* was utterly to root out and destroy the Christian religion.

14. *And profited.* Made advances and attainments. He made advances not only in the knowledge of the Jewish religion, but also he surpassed others in his zeal in defending its interests. He had had better advantages than most of his countrymen; and by his great zeal and characteristic ardour he had been able to make higher attainments than most others had done. ¶ *Above many my equals.* Marg. *Equal in years.* This is the true sense of the original. It means that he surpassed those of the same age with himself. Possibly there may be a reference here to those of the same age who attended with him on the instructions of Gamaliel. ¶ *Being more exceedingly zealous.* More studious of; more ardently attached to them; more anxious to distinguish himself in attainments in the religion in which he was brought up. All this is fully sustained by all that we know of the character of Paul, as at all times a man of singular and eminent zeal in all that he undertook. ¶ *Of the traditions of my fathers.* Or the traditions of the Jews; see Note, Mat. xv. 2. A large part of the doctrines of the Pharisees depended on mere tradition; and Paul doubtless made this a special matter of study, and was particularly tenacious in regard to it. It was to be learned, from the very nature of it, only by *oral* teaching, as there is no evidence that it was then recorded. Subsequently these traditions were recorded in the *Mishna*, and are found in the Jewish

religion above many my<sup>1</sup> equals in mine own nation, being<sup>a</sup> more exceedingly zealous of the traditions<sup>b</sup> of my fathers.

<sup>1</sup> equal in years.

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 22, 3, Ph. 3, 6.

<sup>b</sup> Mar. 7, 5—13.

writings. But in the time of Paul they were to be learned as they were handed down from one to another; and hence the utmost diligence was requisite to obtain a knowledge of them. Paul does not here say that he was zealous then for the practice of the new religion, nor for the study of the Bible. His object in going to Jerusalem and studying at the feet of Gamaliel was doubtless to obtain a knowledge of the traditions of the sect of the Pharisees. Had he been studying the Bible all that time, he would have kept from the fiery zeal which he evinced in persecuting the church, and would, if he had studied it right, been saved from much trouble of conscience afterwards.

15. *But when it pleased God.* Paul traced all his hopes of eternal life, and all the good influences which had ever borne upon his mind, to God. ¶ *Who separated me, &c.* That is, who destined me; or who purposed from my very birth that I should be a preacher and an apostle. The meaning is, that God had in his secret purposes set him apart to be an apostle. It does not mean that he had actually called him in his infancy to the work, for this was not so, but that he designed him to be an important instrument in his hands in spreading the true religion. Jeremiah (i. 5) was thus set apart, and John the Baptist was thus early designated for the work which they afterwards performed. It follows from this, (1.) That God often, if not always, has *purposes* in regard to men from their very birth. He *designs* them for some important field of labour, and endows them at their creation with talents adapted to that. (2.) It does not follow that because a young man has gone far astray; and has become even a blasphemer and a persecutor, that God has not destined him to some important and holy work in his service. How many men have

15 But when it pleased God, <sup>c</sup> who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

<sup>c</sup> Is. 49, 1; Je. 1, 5.

been called, like Paul, and Newton, and Bunyan, and Augustine, from a life of sin to the service of God. (3.) God is often training up men in a remarkable manner for future usefulness. His eye is upon them, and he watches over them, until the time comes for their conversion. His providence was concerned in the education and training of Paul. It was by the divine intention with reference to his future work that he had so many opportunities of education, and was so well acquainted with the "traditions" of that religion which he was yet to demonstrate to be unfounded and false. He gave him the opportunity to cultivate his mind, and prepare to grapple with the Jew in argument, and show him how unfounded were his hopes. So it is often now. He gives to a young man an opportunity of a finished education. Perhaps he suffers him to fall into the snares of infidelity, and to become familiar with the arguments of sceptics, that he may thus be better prepared to meet their sophisms, and to enter into their feelings. His eye is upon them in their wanderings, and they are suffered often to wander far; to range the fields of science; to become distinguished as scholars, as Paul was; until the time comes for their conversion, and then, in accordance with the purpose which set them apart from the world, God converts them, and consecrates all their talents and attainments to his service. (4.) We should never despair of a young man who has wandered far from God. If he has risen high in attainments; if his whole aim is ambition; or if he has become an infidel, still we are not to despair of him. It is *possible* still that God "separated" that talent to his service from the very birth, and that he means yet to call it all to his service. How easy it was to convert Saul of Tarsus when the proper period

16 To reveal <sup>a</sup> his Son in me, that <sup>b</sup> I might preach him among

<sup>a</sup> 2 Co. 4. 6.

<sup>b</sup> Ac. 9. 15.

arrived. So it is of the now unconverted and unconsecrated, but cultivated talent among the young men of our land. Far as they may have wandered from God and virtue, yet much of that talent has been devoted to him in baptism, and by parental purposes and prayers; and, it may be—as is morally certain from the history of the past—that much of it is consecrated also by the divine purpose and intention for the noble cause of virtue and pure religion. In that now apparently wasted talent; in that learning now apparently devoted to other aims and ends, there is much that will yet adorn the cause of virtue and religion; and how fervently should we pray that it may be “called” by the grace of God and actually devoted to his service. ¶ *And called me by his grace.* On the way to Damascus. It was special grace, because he was then engaged in bitterly opposing him and his cause.

16. *To reveal his Son in me.* This is to be regarded as connected with the first part of ver. 15, “When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me,” i. e. on the way to Damascus. The phrase evidently means, to make me acquainted with the Lord Jesus, or to reveal his Son to me; comp. the Greek in Mat. x. 32, for a similar expression. The revelation here referred to was the miraculous manifestation which was made to Paul on his way to Damascus; comp. 2 Cor. iv. 6. That revelation was in order to convince him that he was the Messiah; to acquaint him with his nature, rank, and claims; and to qualify him to be a preacher to the heathen. ¶ *That I might preach him.* In order that I might so preach him; or with a view to my being appointed to this work. This was the leading purpose for which Paul was converted, Acts ix. 15; xxii. 21. ¶ *The heathen.* The Gentiles; the portion of the world that was not Jewish, or that was destitute of the true religion. ¶ *Immediately.* Koppe supposes that this is to be connected with “I went into Arabia” (ver. 17). Rosenmüller sup-

poses it means, “Immediately I consented.” Dr. Wells and Locke suppose that it refers to the fact that he immediately went to Arabia. But this seems to me to be an unnatural construction. The words are too remote from each other to allow of it. The evident sense is, that he was at once decided. He did not take time to deliberate whether he should or should not become a Christian. He made up his mind at once and on the spot. He did not consult with any one; he did not ask advice of any one; he did not wait to be instructed by any one. He was convinced by the vision in an overpowering manner that Jesus was the Messiah, and he yielded at once. The main idea is, that there was no delay, no consultation, no deferring it, that he might see and consult with his friends, or with the friends of Christianity. The object for which he dwells on this is, to show he did not receive his views of the gospel from man. ¶ *I conferred not.* I did not lay the case (*περι-ετιθεμεν*) before any man; I did not confer with any one. ¶ *Flesh and blood.* Any human being, for so the phrase properly signifies; see Note, Mat. xvi. 17. This does not mean here, that Paul did not consult his own ease and happiness; that he was regardless of the sufferings which he might be called to endure; that he was willing to suffer, and was not careful to make provision for his own comfort—which was true in itself—but that he did not lay the case before any man, or any body of men for instruction or advice. He acted promptly and decisively. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision (Acts xxvi. 19), but resolved at once to obey. Many suppose that this passage means that Paul did not take counsel of the evil passions and suggestions of his own heart, or of the feelings which would have prompted him to lead a life of ambition, or a life under the influence of corrupt desires. But however true this was in fact, no such thing is intended here.



the heathen : immediately I conferred not with flesh and <sup>a</sup> blood :

a 2 Co. 5.16.

It means simply that he did not take counsel of any human being. He resolved at once to follow the command of the Saviour, and at once to obey him. The passage shows, (1.) That when the Lord Jesus calls us to follow him we should promptly and decidedly obey. (2.) We should not delay even to take counsel of earthly friends, or wait for human advice, or consult their wishes, but should at once resolve to follow the Lord Jesus. Most persons, when they are awakened to see their guilt, and their minds are impressed on the subject of religion, are prone to *defer* it ; to resolve to think of it at some future time ; or to engage in some other business before they become Christians ; or, at least, they wish to finish what they have on hand before they yield to God. Had Paul pursued this course, he would probably never have become a Christian. It follows, therefore, (3.) That when the Lord Jesus calls us, we should at once abandon any course of life, however pleasant, or any plan of ambition, however brilliant, or any scheme of gain, however promising, in order that we may follow him. What a brilliant career of ambition did Paul abandon ! and how promptly and decidedly did he do it ! He did not pause or hesitate a moment ; but brilliant as were his prospects, he at once forsook all ; paused in mid-career in his ambition ; and without consulting a human being, at once gave his heart to God. Such a course should be pursued by all. Such a promptness and decision will prepare one to become an eminent Christian, and to be eminently useful.

17. *Neither went I up to Jerusalem.* That is, I did not go there at once. I did not go to consult with the apostles there, or to be instructed by them in regard to the nature of the Christian religion. The design of this statement is, to show that in no sense did he derive his commission from man. ¶ *To them which were apostles before me.* This implies that Paul then

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles

regarded himself to be an apostle. They were, he admits, apostles *before* he was ; but he felt also that he had original authority with them, and he did not go to them to receive instruction, or to derive his commission from them. Several of the apostles remained in Jerusalem for a considerable time after the ascension of the Lord Jesus, and it was regarded as the principal place of authority ; see Acts xv. ¶ *But I went into Arabia.* Arabia was south of Damascus, and at no great distance. The line indeed between Arabia Deserta and Syria is not very definitely marked, but it is generally agreed that Arabia extends to a considerable distance into the great Syrian desert. To what part of Arabia, and for what purpose Paul went, is wholly unknown. Nothing is known of the circumstances of this journey ; nor is the time which he spent there known. It is known indeed (ver. 18) that he did not go to Jerusalem until three years after his conversion, but how large a part of this time was spent in Damascus, we have no means of ascertaining. It is probable that Paul was engaged during these three years in preaching the gospel in Damascus and the adjacent regions, and in Arabia ; comp. Acts ix. 20, 22, 27. The account of this journey into Arabia is wholly omitted by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, and this fact, as has been remarked by Paley (*Horræ Paulinæ*, chap. v. No. 2), demonstrates that the Acts and this epistle were not written by the same author, or that the one is independent of the other ; because "if the Acts of the Apostles had been a forged history made up from the epistle, it is impossible that this journey should have been passed over in silence ; if the epistle had been composed out of what the author had read of St. Paul's history in the Acts, it is unaccountable that it should have been inserted." As to the reason why Luke omitted to mention the journey into Arabia, nothing is known. Various conje-

before me ; but I went into Arabia, and returned again into Damascus.

18 Then <sup>a</sup> after three years I

<sup>a</sup> Ac.9.26.

tures have been entertained, but they are mere conjectures. It is sufficient to say, that Luke has by no means recorded *all* that Paul or the other apostles did, nor has he pretended to do it. He has given the leading events in the public labours of Paul ; and it is not at all improbable that he has omitted not a few short excursions made by him for the purpose of preaching the gospel. The journey into Arabia, probably, did not furnish any incidents *in regard to the success of the gospel there* which required particular record by the sacred historian, nor has Paul himself referred to it for any such reason, or intimated that it furnished any incidents, or any facts, that required particularly the notice of the historian. He has mentioned it for a different purpose altogether, to show that he did not receive his commission from the apostles, and that he did not go at once to consult them. He went directly the other way. As Luke, in the Acts, had no occasion to illustrate this ; as he had no occasion to refer to this *argument*, it did not fall in with the design to mention the fact. Nor is it known *why* Paul went into Arabia. Bloomfield supposes that it was in order to recover his health after the calamity which he suffered on the way to Damascus. But every thing in regard to this is mere conjecture. I should rather think it was more in accordance with the general character of Paul that he made this short excursion for the purpose of preaching the gospel. ¶ *And returned again unto Damascus.* He did not go to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles after his visit to Arabia, but returned again to the place where he was converted and preached there, showing that he had not derived his commission from the other apostles.

18. *Then after three years.* Probably three years after his departure from Jerusalem to Damascus, not

went <sup>1</sup> up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19 But other of the apostles

: or, returned.

after his return to Arabia. So most commentators have understood it. ¶ *Went up to Jerusalem.* More correctly, as in the margin, *returned.* ¶ *To see Peter.* Peter was the oldest and most distinguished of the apostles. In chap. ii. 9, he, with James and John, is called a *pillar*. But why Paul went particularly to see *him* is not known. It was probably, however, from the celebrity and distinction which he knew Peter had among the apostles that he wished to become particularly acquainted with him. The word which is here rendered to see (*ἵκεν*) is by no means that which is commonly employed to denote that idea. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament ; and properly means to ascertain by personal inquiry and examination, and then to *narrate*, as a historian was accustomed to do, whence our word *history*. The notion of personally seeing and examining, is one that belongs essentially to the word, and the idea here is that of seeing or visiting Peter in order to a personal acquaintance. ¶ *And abode with him fifteen days.* Probably, says Bloomfield, including three Lord's-days. Why he departed then is unknown. Beza supposes that it was on account of the plots of the Grecians against him, and their intention to destroy him (Acts ix. 29) ; but this is not assigned by Paul himself as a reason. It is probable that the purpose of his visit to Peter would be accomplished in that time, and he would not spend more time than was necessary with him. It is clear that in the short space of *two weeks* he could not have been very extensively taught by Peter the nature of the Christian religion, and probably the time is mentioned here to show that he had not been under the teaching of the apostles.

19. *Save James the Lord's brother* That the James here referred to was an apostle, is clear. The whole con-

saw I none, save James<sup>a</sup> the Lord's brother.

<sup>a</sup> Mar. 6.3.

struction of the sentence demands this supposition. In the list of the apostles in Mat. x. 2,3, two of this name are mentioned, James the son of Zebedee and brother of John, and James the son of Alphaeus. From the Acts of the Apostles, it is clear that there were two of this name in Jerusalem. Of these, James the brother of John was slain by Herod (Acts xii. 2), and the other continued to reside in Jerusalem, Acts xv. 13; xxi. 13. This latter James was called James the Less (Mark xv. 40), to distinguish him from the other James, probably because he was the younger. It is probable that this was the James referred to here, as it is evident from the Acts of the Apostles that he was a prominent man among the apostles in Jerusalem. Commentators have not been agreed as to what is meant by his being the brother of the Lord Jesus. Doddridge understands it as meaning that he was "the near kinsman" or cousin-german to Jesus, for he was, says he, the son of Alphaeus and Mary, the sister of the virgin; and if there were but two of this name, this opinion is undoubtedly correct. In the Apostolical Constitutions (see Rosenmüller) three of this name are mentioned as apostles or eminent men in Jerusalem; and hence many have supposed that one of them was the son of Mary the mother of the Lord Jesus. It is said (Mat. xiii. 55) that the brothers of Jesus were James and Joses, and Simon, and Judas; and it is remarkable that three of the apostles bear the same names; James the son of Alphaeus, Simon Zelotes, and Judas; John xiv. 22. It is indeed possible, as Bloomfield remarks, that three brothers of our Lord and three of his apostles might bear the same names, and yet be different persons; but such a coincidence would be very remarkable, and not easily explained. But if it were not so, then the James here was the son of Alphaeus, and consequently a cousin of the Lord Jesus. The word *brother* may, according to

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

scripture usage, be understood as denoting a *near kinsman*. See Schleusner (Lex. 2) on the word *ἀδελφός*. After all, however, it is not quite certain who is intended. Some have supposed that neither of the apostles of the name of James is intended, but another James who was the son of Mary the mother of Jesus. See Koppe *in loc.* But it is clear, I think, that one of the apostles is intended. Why James is particularly mentioned here is unknown. As, however, he was a prominent man in Jerusalem, Paul would naturally seek his acquaintance. It is possible that the other apostles were absent from Jerusalem during the fifteen days when he was there.

20. *Behold, before God I lie not.* This is an oath, or a solemn appeal to God; see Note, Rom. ix. 1. The design of this oath here is to prevent all suspicion of falsehood. It may seem to be remarkable that Paul should make this solemn appeal to God in this argument, and in the narrative of a plain fact, when his statement could hardly be called in question by any one. But we may remark, (1.) That the oath here refers not only to the fact that he was with Peter and James but fifteen days, but to the *entire group* of facts to which he had referred in this chapter. "The things which I wrote unto you." It included, therefore, the narrative about his conversion, and the direct revelation which he had from the Lord Jesus. (2.) There were no *witnesses* which he could appeal to in this case, and he could, therefore, only appeal to God. It was probably not practicable for him to appeal to Peter or James, as neither of them were in Galatia, and a considerable part of the transactions here referred to occurred where there were no witnesses. It pertained to the direct revelation of truth from the Lord Jesus. The only way, therefore, was for Paul to appeal directly to God for the truth of what he said. (3.) The importance of the truth here affirmed

21 Afterwards I <sup>a</sup> came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia ;

22 And was unknown by face unto the churches <sup>b</sup> of Judea which were in Christ :

<sup>a</sup> Ac.9.30.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Th.2.14.

was such as to justify this solemn appeal to God. It was an extraordinary and miraculous revelation of the truth by Jesus Christ himself. He received information of the truth of Christianity from no human being. He had consulted no one in regard to its nature. That fact was so extraordinary, and it was so remarkable that the system thus communicated to him should harmonize so entirely with that taught by the other apostles with whom he had had no intercourse, that it was not improper to appeal to God in this solemn manner. It was, therefore, no trifling matter in which Paul appealed to God ; and a solemn appeal of the same nature and in the same circumstances can never be improper.

21. *Afterwards I came, &c.* In this account he has omitted a circumstance recorded by Luke (Acts ix. 20), of the controversy which he had with the Grecians or Hellenists. It was not material to the purpose which he has here in view, which is to state that he was not indebted to the apostles for his knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity. He therefore merely states that he left Jerusalem soon after he went there, and travelled to other places. ¶ *The regions of Syria.* Syria was between Jerusalem and Cilicia. Antioch was the capital of Syria, and in that city and the adjacent places he spent considerable time ; comp. Acts xv. 23, 41. ¶ *Cilicia.* This was a province of Asia Minor, of which Tarsus, the native place of Paul, was the capital ; see Note on Acts vi. 9.

22. *And was unknown by face, &c.* Paul had visited Jerusalem only, and he had formed no acquaintance with any of the churches in the other parts of Judea. He regarded himself at the first as called to preach particularly to the Gentiles, and he did not remain even to form an acquaintance

23 But they had heard <sup>c</sup> only, That he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

24 And they glorified <sup>d</sup> God in me.

<sup>c</sup> Ac.9.13,26.

<sup>d</sup> Ac.21.19,20.

with the Christians in Judea. ¶ *The churches of Judea.* Those which were out of Jerusalem. Even at the early period of the conversion of Paul there were doubtless many churches in various parts of the land. ¶ *Which were in Christ.* United to Christ ; or which were Christian churches. The design of mentioning this is, to show that he had not derived his views of the gospel from any of them. He had neither been instructed by the apostles, nor was he indebted to the Christians in Judea for his knowledge of the Christian religion.

23. *But they had heard only, &c.* They had not seen me ; but the remarkable fact of my conversion had been reported to them. It was a fact that could hardly be concealed ; see Note, Acts xxvi. 26.

24. *And they glorified God in me.* They praised God on my account. They regarded me as a true convert and a sincere Christian ; and they praised God that he had converted such a persecutor, and had made him a preacher of the gospel. The design for which this is mentioned is, to show that though he was personally unknown to them, and had not derived his views of the gospel from them, yet that he had their entire confidence. They regarded him as a convert and an apostle, and they were disposed to praise God for his conversion. This fact would do much to conciliate the favour of the Galatians, by showing them that he had the confidence of the churches in the very land where the gospel was first planted, and which was regarded as the source of ecclesiastical authority. In view of this we may remark, (1.) That it is the duty of Christians kindly and affectionately to receive among their number those who have been converted from a career of persecution or of sin in any form. And it is always done by true Christians. It is easy to forgive a

man who has been actively engaged in persecuting the church, or a man who has been profane, intemperate, dishonest, or licentious, if he becomes a true penitent, and confesses and forsakes his sins. No matter what his life has been; no matter how abandoned, sensual, or devilish; if he manifests true sorrow and gives evidence of a change of heart, he is cordially received into any church, and welcomed as a fellow-labourer in the cause which he once destroyed. Here, at least, is one place where forgiveness is cordial and perfect. His former life is not remembered, except to praise God for his grace in recovering a sinner from such a course; the evils that he has done are forgotten; and he is henceforward regarded as entitled to all the privileges and immunities of a member of the household of faith. There is not on earth an infuriated persecutor or blasphemer who would not be cordially welcomed to any Christian church on the evidence of his repentance; not a man so debased and vile that the most pure, and elevated, and learned, and wealthy Christians would not rejoice to sit down with him at the same communion table on the evidence of his conversion to God. (2.) We should "glorify" or praise God for all such instances of conversion. We should do it because, (a) Of the abstraction of the talents of the persecutor from the cause of evil. Paul could have done, and would have done immense service to the enemies of Christianity if he had pursued the career which he had commenced. But when he was converted, all that bad influence ceased. So when an infidel or a profligate man is converted now, (b) Because now his talents will be consecrated to a better service. They will be employed in the cause of truth and salvation. All the power of the matured and educated talent will now be devoted to the interests of religion; and it is a fact for which we should thank God, that he often takes educated talent, and commanding influence, and an established reputation for ability, learning, and zeal, and devotes it to his own service. (c) Because there

will be a change of destiny; because the enemy of the Redeemer will now be saved. The moment when Saul of Tarsus was converted, was the moment which determined a change in his eternal destiny. Before, he was in the broad way to hell; henceforward he walked in the path of life and salvation. Thus we should always rejoice over a sinner returning from the error of his ways; and should praise God that he who was in danger of eternal ruin is now an heir of glory. Christians are not jealous in regard to the numbers who shall enter heaven. They feel that there is "room" for all; that the feast is ample for all; and they rejoice when *any* can be induced to come with them and partake of the happiness of heaven. (3.) We may still glorify and praise God for the grace manifested in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. What does not the world owe to him! What do we not owe to him! No man did as much in establishing the Christian religion as he did; no one among the apostles was the means of converting and saving so many souls; no one has left so many and so valuable writings for the edification of the church. To him we owe the invaluable epistles—so full of truth, and eloquence, and promises, and consolations—on which we are commenting; and to him the church owes, under God, some of its most elevated and ennobling views of the nature of Christian doctrine and duty. After the lapse, therefore, of eighteen hundred years, we should not cease to glorify God for the conversion of this wonderful man, and should feel that *we* have cause of thankfulness that he changed the infuriated persecutor to a holy and devoted apostle. (4.) Let us remember that God has the same power now. There is not a persecutor whom he could not convert with the same ease with which he changed Saul of Tarsus. There is not a vile and sensual man that he could not make pure; not a dishonest man that his grace could not make honest; not a blasphemer that he could not teach to venerate his name; not a lost and abandoned sinner that he cannot receive to himself. Let us

## CHAPTER II.

THEN, fourteen years after, <sup>a</sup>  
I went up again to Jerusalem

then without ceasing cry unto him that his grace may be continually manifested in reclaiming such sinners from the error of their ways, and bringing them to the knowledge of the truth, and to a consecration of their lives to his service.

## CHAPTER II.

## ANALYSIS.

THE second chapter is closely connected in sense with the first, and is indeed a part of the same argument. Injury has been done by the division which is made. The proper division would have been at the close of the 10th verse of this chapter. The general scope of the chapter, like the first, is to show that he did not receive the gospel from man; that he had not derived it from the apostles; that he did not acknowledge his indebtedness to them for his views of the Christian religion; that they had not even set up *authority* over him; but that they had welcomed him as a fellow-labourer, and acknowledged him as a coadjutor in the work of the apostleship. In confirmation of this he states (ver. 1) that he had indeed gone to Jerusalem, but that he had done it by express revelation (ver. 2); that he was cordially received by the apostles there—especially by those who were pillars in the church; and that so far from regarding himself as inferior to the other apostles, he had resisted Peter to his face at Antioch on a most important and vital doctrine.

The chapter, therefore, may be regarded as divided into two portions, viz. :—

I. *The account of his visit to Jerusalem and of what occurred there, ver. 1—10.*

(a) He had gone up fourteen years after his conversion, after having laboured long among the Gentiles in his own way, and without having felt his dependence on the apostles at Jerusalem, ver. 1, 2.

(b) When he was there, there was no attempt made to compel him to submit to the Jewish rites and cus-

with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 15. 2, &c.

toms; and what was conclusive in the case was, that they had not even required Titus to be circumcised, thus proving that they did not assert jurisdiction over Paul, and that they did not intend to impose the Mosaic rites on the converts from among the Gentiles, ver. 3—5.

(c) The most distinguished persons among the apostles at Jerusalem, he says, received him kindly, and admitted him to their confidence and favour without hesitation. They added no heavy burdens to him (ver. 6); they saw evidence that he had been appointed to bear the gospel to the Gentiles (ver. 7, 8); they gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship (ver. 9); and they asked only that they should remember and show kindness to the poor saints in Judea, and thus manifest an interest in those who had been converted from Judaism, or contribute their proper proportion to the maintenance of all, and show that they were not disposed to abandon their own countrymen, ver. 10. In this way they gave the fullest proof that they approved the course of Paul, and admitted him into entire fellowship with them as an apostle.

II. *The scene at Antioch, where Paul rebuked Peter for his dissimulation; ver 11—21.* The main object of mentioning this seems to be to show, first, that he did not regard himself as inferior to the other apostles, or that he had not derived his views of the gospel from them; and, secondly, to state that the observance of the Jewish rites was not necessary to salvation, and that he had maintained that from the beginning. He had strongly urged it in a controversy with Peter, and in a case where Peter was manifestly wrong; and it was no new doctrine on the subject of justification which he had preached to the Galatians. He states, therefore,

(a) That he had opposed Peter at Antioch, because he had dissembled there, and that even Barnabas had been carried away with the course

which Peter had practised ; ver. 11—14.

(b) That the Jews must be justified by faith, and not by dependence on their own law ; ver. 15, 16.

(c) That they who are justified by faith should act consistently, and not attempt to build again the things which they had destroyed ; ver. 17, 18.

(d) That the effect of justification by faith was to make one dead to the law that he might live unto God ; that the effect of it was to make one truly alive and devoted to the cause of true religion ; and to show this, he appeals to the effect of his own heart and life (ver. 19, 20).

(e) And that if justification could be obtained by the law, then Christ had died in vain ; ver. 21. He thus shows that the effect of teaching the necessity of the observance of the Jewish rites was to destroy the gospel, and to render it vain and useless.

1. *Then fourteen years after.* That is, fourteen years after his first visit there subsequent to his conversion. Some commentators, however, suppose that the date of the fourteen years is to be reckoned from his conversion. But the more obvious construction is, to refer it to the time of his visit there, as recorded in the previous chapter ; ver. 18. This time was spent in Asia Minor chiefly in preaching the gospel. ¶ *I went up again to Jerusalem.* It is commonly supposed that Paul here refers to the visit which he made as recorded in Acts xv. The circumstances mentioned are substantially the same ; and the object which he had at that time in going up was one whose mention was entirely pertinent to the argument here. He went up with Barnabas to submit a question to the assembled apostles and elders at Jerusalem, in regard to the necessity of the observance of the laws of Moses. Some persons who had come among the Gentile converts from Judea had insisted on the necessity of being circumcised in order to be saved. Paul and Barnabas had opposed them ; and the dispute had become so warm that it was agreed to submit the subject to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. For that

purpose Paul and Barnabas had been sent, with certain others, to lay the case before all the apostles. As the question which Paul was discussing in this epistle was about the necessity of the observance of the laws of Moses in order to justification, it was *exactly in point* to refer to a journey when this very question had been submitted to the apostles. Paul indeed had made another journey to Jerusalem before this with the collection for the poor saints in Judea (Acts xi. 29, 30 ; xii. 25), but he does not mention that here, probably because he did not then see the other apostles, or more probably because that journey furnished no illustration of the point now under debate. On the occasion here referred to (Acts xv.), the very point under discussion here constituted the main subject of inquiry, and was definitely settled. ¶ *And took Titus with me also.* Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles (xv. 2), says, that there were others with Paul and Barnabas on that journey to Jerusalem. But who they were he does not mention. It is by no means certain that Titus was *appointed* by the church to go to Jerusalem ; but the contrary is more probable. Paul seems to have taken him with him as a private affair ; but the reason is not mentioned. It may have been to show his Christian liberty, and his sense of what he had a right to do ; or it may have been to *furnish a case* on the subject of inquiry, and submit the matter to them whether Titus was *to be* circumcised. He was a Greek ; but he had been converted to Christianity. Paul had not circumcised him ; but had admitted him to the full privileges of the Christian church. Here then was *a case in point* ; and it may have been important to have had such a case before them, that they might fully understand it. This, as Doddridge properly remarks, is the first mention which occurs of Titus. He is not mentioned by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, and though his name occurs several times in the second epistle to the Corinthians (ii. 13 ; vii. 6 ; viii. 6, 16, 23 ; xii. 18), yet it is to be remembered that that epistle was written a consid-

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto

them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles; but <sup>1</sup> pri-

1 or, severally.

erable time after this to the Galatians. Titus was a Greek, and was doubtless converted by the labours of Paul, for he calls him his own son, Tit. i. 4. He attended Paul frequently in his travels; was employed by him in important services (see 2 Cor. in the places referred to above); was left by him in Crete to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders there (Tit. i. 5); subsequently he went into Dalmatia (2 Tim. iv. 10), and is supposed to have returned again to Crete, whence it is said he propagated the gospel in the neighbouring islands, and died at the age of 94.—*Calmet*.

2. And I went up by revelation.

Not for the purpose of receiving instruction from the apostles there in regard to the nature of the Christian religion. It is to be remembered that the design for which Paul states this is, to show that he had not received the gospel from men. He is careful, therefore, to state that he went up by the express command of God. He did not go up to receive instructions from the apostles there in regard to his own work, or to be confirmed by them in his apostolic office, but he went to submit an important question pertaining to the church at large. In Acts xv. 2, it is said that Paul and Barnabas went up by the appointment of the church at Antioch. But there is no discrepancy between that account and this, for though he was designated by the church there, there is no improbability in supposing that he was directed by a special revelation to comply with their request. The reason why he says that he went up by direct revelation seems to be, to show that he did not seek instruction from the apostles; he did not go of his own accord to consult with them as if he were dependent on them; but even in a case when he went to advise with them he was under the influence of express and direct revelation, proving that he was as much commissioned by God as they were. ¶ And

communicated unto them that gospel, &c. Made them acquainted with the doctrines which he preached among the heathen. He stated fully the principles on which he acted; the nature of the gospel which he taught; and his doctrine about the exemption of the Gentiles from the obligations of the law of Moses. He thus satisfied them in regard to his views of the gospel; and showed them that he understood the system of Christianity which had been revealed. The result was, that they had entire confidence in him, and admitted him to entire fellowship with them; ver. 9. ¶ But privately. Marg. Severally. Gr. κατ' ἰδίαν. The phrase means that he did it not in a public manner; not before a promiscuous assembly; not even before all the apostles collected together, but in a private manner to a few of the leaders and chief persons. He made a private explanation of his motives and views, that they might understand it before it became a matter of public discussion. The point on which Paul made this private explanation was not whether the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, for on that they had no doubt after the revelation to Peter (Acts x.); but whether the rites of the Jews were to be imposed on the Gentile converts. Paul explained his views and his practice on that point, which were that he did not impose those rites on the Gentiles; that he taught that men might be justified without their observance; and that they were not necessary in order to salvation. The reasons why he sought this private interview with the leading men in Jerusalem he has not stated. But we may suppose that they were something like the following. (1.) The Jews in general had very strong attachment to their own customs, and this attachment was found in a high degree among those who were converted from among them to the Christian faith. They would be strongly excited, therefore, by the doctrine that those customs were not necessary



vately to them which were of <sup>a</sup> should run, or had run, in reputation, lest by any means I vain.

<sup>a</sup> Ph.2.16.

to be observed. (2.) If the matter were submitted to a promiscuous assembly of converts from Judaism, it could not fail to produce great excitement. They could not be made readily to understand the reasons why Paul acted in this manner; there would be no possibility in an excited assemblage to offer the explanations which might be desirable; and after every explanation which could be given in this manner, they might have been unable to understand all the circumstances of the case. (3.) If a few of the principal men were made to understand it, Paul felt assured that their influence would be such as to prevent any great difficulty. He therefore sought an early opportunity to lay the case before them in private, and to secure their favour; and this course contributed to the happy issue of the whole affair; see Acts xv. There was indeed much disputation when the question came to be submitted to "the apostles and elders" (Acts xv. 7); many of the sect of the Pharisees in that assembly maintained that it was needful to teach the Gentiles that the law of Moses was to be kept (Acts xv. 5); and no one can tell what would have been the issue of that discussion among the excitable minds of the converts from Judaism, had not Paul taken the precaution, as he here says, to have submitted the case in private to those who were of "reputation," and if Peter and James had not in this manner been satisfied, and had not submitted the views which they did, as recorded in Acts xv. 7—21, and which terminated the whole controversy. We may just remark here that this fact furnishes an argument such as Paley has dwelt so much on in his *Hæretic Paulinæ*—though he has not referred to this—of what he calls *undesigned coincidences*. The affair in Acts xv. and the course of the debate, *looks very much* as if Peter and James had had some conference with Paul in private, and had had an opportunity of under-

standing fully his views on the subject before the matter came before the "apostles and elders" in public, though no such private conference is there referred to by Luke. But on turning to the epistle to the Galatians, we find in fact that he had on one occasion before seen the same Peter and James (chap. i. 18, 19); and that he had had a private interview with those "of reputation" on these very points, and particularly that James, Peter, and John had approved his course, and given to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship; chap. ii. 9. Thus understood, the case here referred to was one of the most consummate instances of prudence that occurred in the life of Paul; and from this case we may learn, (1.) That when a difficulty is to be settled involving great principles, and embracing a great many points, it is better to seek an opportunity of *private explanation* than to submit it to a promiscuous multitude or to public debate. It is not well to attempt to settle important points when the passions of a promiscuous assembly may be excited, and where prejudices are strong. It is better to do it by private explanations, when there is an opportunity coolly to ask questions and to state the facts just as they are. (2.) The importance of securing the countenance of influential men in a popular assembly; of having men in the assembly who would understand the whole case. It was morally certain that if such men as Peter and James were made to understand the case, there would be little difficulty in arriving at an amicable adjustment of the difficulty. (3.) Though this passage does not refer to preaching the gospel in general, since the gospel here submitted to the men of reputation was the question referred to above, yet we may remark, that great prudence should be used in preaching; in stating truths that may excite prejudices, or when we have reason to apprehend prejudices; and that it is

3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised :

often best to preach the gospel to men of reputation (*κατ' ιδίαν*) *separately*, or *privately*. In this way the truth can be made to bear on the conscience; it may be better adapted to the character of the individual; he may put himself less in a state of defence, and guard himself less against the proper influences of truth. And especially is this true in *conversing* with persons on the subject of religion. It should be if possible *alone*, or *privately*. Almost any man may be approached on the subject of religion if it be done when he is alone; when he is at leisure, and if it be done in a kind spirit. Almost any man will become irritated if you address him personally in a promiscuous assembly, or even with his family around him. I have never in more than in one or two instances been unkindly treated when I have addressed an individual on the subject of religion if he was alone; and though a minister should never shrink from stating the truth, and should never be afraid of man, however exalted his rank, or great his talents, or vast his wealth, yet he will probably meet with most success when he discourses *privately* to "them which are of reputation." ¶ *To them which were of reputation.* Meaning here the leading men among the apostles. Tindal renders this, "which are counted chiefs." Doddridge, "those of greatest note in the church." The Greek is, literally, "those who seem," more fully in ver. 6; "who seem to be something," i. e. who are persons of note, or who are distinguished. ¶ *Lest by any means I should run, or had run in vain.* Lest the effects of my labours and journeys should be lost. Paul feared that if he did not take this method of laying the case before them privately, they would not understand it. Others might misrepresent him, or their prejudices might be excited, and when the case came before the assembled apostles and elders, a decision might

4 And that because of false <sup>a</sup> brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 15. 1, 24.

be adopted which would go to prove that he had been entirely wrong in his views, or which would lead those whom he had taught, to believe that he was, and which would greatly hinder and embarrass him in his future movements. In order to prevent this, therefore, and to secure a just decision, and one which would not hinder his future usefulness, he had sought this private interview, and thus his object was gained.

3. *But neither Titus, who was with me.* Paul introduces this case of Titus undoubtedly to show that circumcision was not necessary to salvation. It was a case just in point. He had gone up to Jerusalem with express reference to this question. Here was a man whom he had admitted to the Christian church without circumcising him. He claimed that he had a right to do so; and that circumcision was not *necessary* in order to salvation. If it were necessary, it would have been proper that Titus should have been compelled to submit to it. But Paul says this was not demanded; or if demanded by any, the point was yielded, and he was not compelled to be circumcised. It is to be remembered that this was at Jerusalem; that it was a case submitted to the apostles there; and that consequently the determination of this case settled the whole controversy about the obligation of the Mosaic laws on the Gentile converts. It is quite evident from the whole statement here, that Paul did not intend that Titus should be circumcised; that he maintained that it was not necessary; and that he resisted it when it was demanded; ver. 4, 5. Yet on another occasion he himself performed the act of circumcision on Timothy; Acts xvi. 3. But there is no inconsistency in his conduct. In the case of Titus it was *demanded* as a matter of right and as obligatory on him, and he resisted the principle as dangerous. In the case of Timothy, it was a voluntary

liberty <sup>a</sup> which we have in Christ

Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> chap. 5.1.13. <sup>b</sup> 2 Co. 11.20; chap. 4.3,9.

compliance on his part with the usual customs of the Jews, where it was not pressed as a matter of obligation, *and where it would not be understood as indispensable to salvation.* No danger would follow from compliance with the custom, and it might do much to conciliate the favour of the Jews, and he therefore submitted to it. Paul would not have hesitated to have circumcised Titus in the same circumstances in which it was done to Timothy; but the circumstances were different; and when it was insisted on as a matter of principle and of obligation, it became a matter of principle and of obligation with him to oppose it. ¶ *Being a Greek.* Born of Gentile parents, of course he had not been circumcised. Probably both his parents were Greeks. The case with Timothy was somewhat different. His mother was a Jewess, but his father was a Greek; Acts xvi. 3. ¶ *Was compelled to be circumcised.* I think it is implied here that this was demanded and insisted on by some that he should be circumcised. It is also implied that Paul resisted it, and the point was yielded, thus settling the great and important principle that it was not necessary in order to salvation; see ver. 5.

4. *And that because of false brethren.* Who these false brethren were is not certainly known, nor is it known whether he refers to those who were at Jerusalem or to those who were at Antioch. It is probable that he refers to *Judaizing Christians*, or persons who claimed to be Christians and to have been converted from Judaism. Whether they were dissemblers and hypocrites, or whether they were so imperfectly acquainted with Christianity, and so obstinate, opinionated, and perverse, though really in some respects good men, that they were conscientious in this, it is not easy to determine. It is clear, however, that they opposed the apostle Paul; that they regarded him as teaching dangerous doctrines; that they perverted and misstated his

views; and that they claimed to have clearer views of the nature of the true religion than he had. Such adversaries he met everywhere (2 Cor. xi. 26); and it required all his tact and skill to meet their plausible representations. It is evident here that Paul is assigning a *reason* for something which he had done, and that reason was to counteract the influence of the "false brethren" in the case. But what is the thing concerning which he assigns a reason? It is commonly supposed to have been on account of the fact that he did not submit to the circumcision of Titus, and that he means to say that he resisted that in order to counteract their influence, and defeat their designs. But I would submit whether ver. 3 is not to be regarded as a parenthesis, and whether the fact for which he assigns a *reason* is not that he sought a private interview with the leading men among the apostles? ver. 2. The *reason* of his doing that would be obvious. In this way he could more easily counteract the influence of the false brethren. He could make a full statement of his doctrines. He could meet their inquiries, and anticipate the objections of his enemies. He could thus secure the influence of the leading apostles in his favour, and effectually prevent all the efforts of the false brethren to impose the Jewish rites on Gentile converts. ¶ *Unawares brought in.* The word rendered "unawares" (*παρ' αὐτοῦ*) is derived from a verb meaning to lead in by the side of others, to introduce along with others; and then to lead or bring in by stealth, to smuggle in.—*Robinson, Lex.* The verb occurs nowhere in the New Testament but in 2 Pet. ii. 1, where it is applied to heresies, and is rendered "Who privily shall bring in." Here it refers probably to men who had been artfully introduced into the ministry, who made pretensions to piety, but who were either strangers to it, or who were greatly ignorant of the true nature of the Christian system; and who were disposed to take

5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour ;

that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

every advantage, and to impose on others the observance of the peculiar rites of the Mosaic economy. *Into what* they were brought, the apostle does not say. It may have been that they had been introduced into the ministry in this manner (*Doddridge*) ; or it may be that they were introduced into the "assembly" where the apostles were collected to deliberate on the subject.—*Chandler*. I think it probable that Paul refers to the occurrences in Jerusalem, and that these false brethren had been introduced from Antioch or some other place where Paul had been preaching, or that they were persons whom his adversaries had introduced to demand that Titus should be circumcised, under the plausible pretence that the laws of Moses required it, but really in order that there might be such proof as they desired that this rite was to be imposed on the Gentile converts. If Paul was compelled to submit to this ; if they could carry this point, it would be just such an instance as they needed, and would settle the whole inquiry, and prove that the Mosaic laws were to be imposed on the Gentile converts. This was the reason why Paul so strenuously opposed it. ¶ *To spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus*. In the practice of the Christian religion. The liberty referred to was, doubtless, the liberty from the painful, expensive, and onerous rites of the Jewish religion ; see chap. v. 1. Their object in spying out the liberty which Paul and others had, was, undoubtedly, to be witnesses of the fact that they did not observe the peculiar rites of the Mosaic system ; to make report of it ; to insist on their complying with those customs, and thus to secure the imposition of those rites on the Gentile converts. Their first object was to satisfy themselves of the fact that Paul did not insist on the observance of their customs ; and then to secure, by the authority of the apostles, an injunction or order that Titus should be circumcised, and

that Paul and the converts made under his ministry should be required to comply with those laws. ¶ *That they might bring us into bondage*. Into bondage to the laws of Moses ; see Note, Acts xv. 10.

5. *To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour*. We did not submit to this at all. We did not yield even for the shortest time. We did not waver in our opposition to their demands, or in the slightest degree become subject to their wishes. We steadily opposed their claims, in order that the great principle might be forever settled, that the laws of Moses were not to be imposed as obligatory on the Gentile converts. This I take to be the clear and obvious sense of this passage, though there has been a great variety of opinions on it. A considerable number of MSS. omit the words *οἱ ὅτι*, "to whom neither" (see Mill, Koppe, and Griesbach), and then the sense would be reversed, that Paul *did* yield to them for or after a short time, in order that he might in this way better consult the permanent interests of the gospel. This opinion has been gaining ground for the last century, that the passage here has been corrupted ; but it is by no means confirmed. The ancient versions, the Syriac, the Vulgate, and the Arabic, accord with the usual reading of the text. So also do by far the largest portion of MSS., and such, it seems to me, is the sense demanded by the connection. Paul means, in the whole passage, to say, that a great principle was settled. That the question came up fairly whether the Mosaic rites were to be imposed on Gentile converts. That false brethren were introduced who demanded it ; and that he steadily maintained his ground. He did not yield a moment. He felt that a great principle was involved ; and though on all proper occasions he was willing to yield and to become all things to all men, yet here he did not court them, or temporize with them in the least. The phrase "by subjec-

6 But of those who seemed *a* somewhat, in conference added nothing to me ;  
 to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me : God *b* accepteth no man's person : for they who seemed *to be*

*a* chap. 6.3.

*b* Ac. 10.34 ; Ro. 2.1.

tion" here means, that he did not suffer himself to be *compelled* to yield. The phrase "for an hour" is equivalent to the shortest period of time. He did not waver, or yield at all. ¶ *That the truth of the gospel might continue with you.* That the great principle of the Christian religion which had been taught you might continue, and that you might enjoy the full benefit of the pure gospel, without its being intermingled with any false views. Paul had defended these same views among the Galatians, and he now sought that the same views might be confirmed by the clear decision of the college of apostles at Jerusalem.

6. *But of those who seemed to be somewhat*; see ver. 2. This undoubtedly refers to those who were the most eminent among the apostles at Jerusalem. There is an apparent harshness in our common translation which is unnecessary. The word here used (*δοκίμοι*) denotes those who were thought to be, or who were of reputation ; that is, men who were of note and influence among the apostles. The object of referring to them here is, to show that he had the concurrence and approbation of the most eminent of the apostles to the course which he had pursued. ¶ *Whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me.* Tindal reads this, "What they were in time passed, it maketh no matter to me." The idea seems to be this. Paul means to say that whatever was their real rank and standing, it did not in the least affect his authority as an apostle, or his argument. While he rejoiced in their concurrence, and while he sought their approbation, yet he did not admit for a moment that he was inferior to them as an apostle, or dependent on them for the justness of his views. What they were, or what they might be thought to be, was immaterial to his claims as an apostle,

and immaterial to the authority of his own views as an apostle. He had derived his gospel from the Lord Jesus ; and he had the fullest assurance that his views were just. Paul makes this remark evidently in *keeping* with all that he had said, that he did not regard himself as in any manner dependent on them for his authority. He did not treat them with disrespect ; but he did not regard them as having a *right* to claim an authority over him. ¶ *God accepteth no man's person* ; see Notes, Acts x. 34 ; Rom. ii. 11. This is a general truth, that God is not influenced in his judgment by a regard to the rank, or wealth, or external condition of any one. Its particular meaning here is, that the authority of the apostles was not to be measured by their external rank, or by the measure of reputation which they had among men. If, therefore, it were to be admitted that he himself was not in circumstances of so much external honour as the other apostles, or that they were esteemed to be of more elevated rank than he was, still he did not admit that this gave them a claim to any higher authority. God was not influenced in *his* judgment by any such consideration ; and Paul therefore claimed that all the apostles were in fact on a level in regard to their authority. ¶ *In conference.* When I conferred with them, ver. 2. They did not then impose on me any new obligations ; they did not communicate any thing to me of which I was before ignorant.

7. *The gospel of the uncircumcision.* The duty of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised part of the world ; that is, to the Gentiles. Paul had received this as his peculiar office when he was converted and called to the ministry (see Acts ix. 15 ; xxii. 21) ; and they now perceived that he had been specially intrusted with this office, from the remarkable success

*as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter ;*

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship  
a 1Th.2.4 ; 1Ti.2.7.

which had attended his labours. It is evidently not meant here that Paul was to preach *only* to the Gentiles and Peter *only* to the Jews, for Paul often preached in the synagogues of the Jews, and Peter was the first who preached to a Gentile (Acts x.) ; but it is meant that it was the *main* business of Paul to preach to the Gentiles, or that this was especially intrusted to him. ¶ *As the gospel of the circumcision.* As the office of preaching the gospel to the Jews. ¶ *Was unto Peter.* Peter was to preach principally to the circumcised Jews. It is evident that until this time Peter had been principally employed in preaching to the Jews. Paul selects Peter here particularly, doubtless because he was the oldest of the apostles, and in order to show that he was himself regarded as on a level in regard to the apostleship with the most aged and venerable of those who had been called to the apostolic office by the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus.

8. *For he that wrought effectually in Peter, &c.* Or by the means or agency of Peter. The argument here is, that the same effects had been produced under the ministry of Paul among the Gentiles which had been under the preaching of Peter among the Jews. It is inferred, therefore, that God had called both to the apostolic office ; see this argument illustrated in the Notes on Acts xi. 17. ¶ *The same was mighty in me, &c.* In enabling me to work miracles, and in the success which attended the ministry.

9. *And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars* That is, pillars or supports in the church. The word rendered *pillars* (στυλαί) means properly firm support ; then persons of influence and authority, as in a church, or that support a church as a pillar or column does an edifice. In regard to James, see Note on chap. i. 19 ; comp. Acts xv. 13. Cephas or

of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles ;)

9 And when James, Cephas,

Peter was the most aged of the apostles, and regarded as at the head of the apostolical college. John was the beloved disciple, and his influence in the church must of necessity have been great. Paul felt that if he had the countenance of these men, it would be an important proof to the churches of Galatia that he had a right to regard himself as an apostle. Their countenance was expressed in the most full and decisive manner. ¶ *Perceived the grace that was given unto me.* That is, the favour that had been shown to me by the great Head of the church, in so abundantly blessing my labours among the Gentiles. ¶ *They gave unto me and Barnabas the right-hands of fellowship.* The right-hand in token of fellowship or favour. They thus publicly acknowledged us as fellow-labourers, and expressed the utmost confidence in us. To give the right-hand with us is a token of friendly salutation, and it seems that it was a mode of salutation not unknown in the times of the apostles. They were thus recognised as associated with the apostles in the great work of spreading the gospel around the world. Whether this was done in a public manner is not certainly known ; but it was probably in the presence of the church, or possibly at the close of the council referred to in Acts xv. ¶ *That we should go unto the heathen.* To preach the gospel, and to establish churches. In this way the whole matter was settled, and settled as Paul desired it to be. A delightful harmony was produced between Paul and the apostles at Jerusalem ; and the result showed the wisdom of the course which he had adopted. There had been no harsh contention or strife. No jealousies had been suffered to arise. Paul had sought an opportunity of a full statement of his views to them in private (ver. 2), and they had been entirely satisfied that God had called him and

and John, who seemed to be pillars, "perceived the grace<sup>b</sup> that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right-hands

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 16. 18; Ep. 2. 20.

Barnabas to the work of making known the gospel among the heathen. Instead of being jealous at their success, they had rejoiced in it; and instead of throwing any obstacle in their way, they cordially gave them the right-hand. How easy would it be always to prevent jealousies and strifes in the same way! If there was, on the one hand, the same readiness for a full and frank explanation; and if, on the other, the same freedom from envy at remarkable success, how many strifes that have disgraced the church might have been avoided! The true way to avoid strife is just that which is here proposed. Let there be on both sides perfect frankness; let there be a willingness to explain and state things just as they are; and let there be a disposition to rejoice in the talents, and zeal, and success of others, even though it should far outstrip our own, and contention in the church would cease, and every devoted and successful minister of the gospel would receive the right-hand of fellowship from all—however venerable by age or authority—who love the cause of true religion.

10. *Only they would that we should remember the poor.* That is, as I suppose, the poor Christians in Judea. It can hardly be supposed that it would be necessary to make this an express stipulation in regard to the converts from among the Gentiles, and it would not have been very pertinent to the case before them to have done so. The object was, to bind together the Christians from among the heathen and from among the Jews, and to prevent alienation and unkind feeling. It might have been alleged that Paul was disposed to forget his own countrymen altogether; that he regarded himself as so entirely the apostle of the Gentiles that he would become wholly alienated from those who were his "kinsmen according to

of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

10 Only *they would* that we

<sup>b</sup> Ro. 1. 5; 12. 3, 6.

the flesh," and thus it might be apprehended that unpleasant feelings would be engendered among those who had been converted from among the Jews. Now nothing could be better adapted to allay this than for him to pledge himself to feel a deep interest in the poor saints among the Jewish converts; to remember them in his prayers; and to endeavour to secure contributions for their wants. Thus he would show that he was not alienated from his countrymen; and thus the whole church would be united in the closest bonds. It is probable that the Christians in Judea were at that time suffering the ills of poverty arising either from some public persecution, or from the fact that they were subject to the displeasure of their countrymen. All who know the peculiar feelings of the Jews at that time in regard to Christians, must see at once that many of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth would be subjected to great inconveniences on account of their attachment to him. Many a wife might be disowned by her husband; many a child disinherited by a parent; many a man might be thrown out of employment by the fact that others would not countenance him; and hence many of the Christians would be poor. It became, therefore, an object of special importance to provide for them; and hence this is so often referred to in the New Testament. In addition to this, the church in Judea was afflicted with famine; comp. Acts xi. 30; Rom. xv. 25—27; 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2; 2 Cor. viii. 1—7. ¶ *The same which I also was forward to do.* See the passages just referred to. Paul interested himself much in the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and in this way he furnished the fullest evidence that he was not alienated from them, but that he felt the deepest interest in those who were his kindred. One of the proper ways of securing union

should remember the poor; the same which I <sup>a</sup> also was forward to do.

11 But when Peter was come

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 11.30; Ro. 15.25.

in the church is to have the poor with them and depending on them for support; and hence every church has some poor persons as one of the bonds of union. The best way to unite all Christians, and to prevent alienation, and jealousy, and strife, is to have a *great common object of charity*, in which all are interested and to which all may contribute. Such a common object for all Christians is a sinful world. All who bear the Christian name may unite in promoting its salvation, and nothing would promote union in the now divided and distracted church of Christ like a deep and common interest in the salvation of all mankind.

11. *But when Peter was come to Antioch.* On the situation of Antioch, see Note, Acts xi. 19. The design for which Paul introduces this statement here is evident. It is to show that he regarded himself as on a level with the chief apostles, and that he did not acknowledge his inferiority to any of them. Peter was the eldest, and probably the most honoured of the apostles. Yet Paul says that he did not hesitate to resist him in a case where Peter was manifestly wrong, and thus showed that he was an apostle of the same standing as the others. Besides, what he said to Peter on that occasion was exactly pertinent to the strain of the argument which he was pursuing with the Galatians, and he therefore introduces it (ver. 14—21) to show that he had held the same doctrine all along, and that he had defended it in the presence of Peter, and in a case where Peter did not reply to it. The time of this journey of Peter to Antioch cannot be ascertained; nor the occasion on which it occurred. I think it is evident that it was after this visit of Paul to Jerusalem, and the occasion may have been to inspect the state of the church at Antioch, and to compose any differences of opinion which may have

to <sup>b</sup> Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain

<sup>b</sup> Ac. 15.35.

existed there. But every thing in regard to this is mere conjecture; and it is of little importance to know when it occurred. ¶ *I withstood him to the face.* I openly opposed him, and reproofed him. Paul thus showed that he was equal with Peter in his apostolical authority and dignity. The instance before us is one of faithful public reproof; and every circumstance in it is worthy of special attention, as it furnishes a most important illustration of the manner in which such reproof should be conducted. The first thing to be noted is, that it was done openly, and with candour. It was reproof addressed to the offender himself. Paul did not go to others and whisper his suspicions; he did not seek to undermine the influence and authority of another by slander; he did not calumniate him and then justify himself on the ground that what he had said was no more than true: he went to him at once, and he frankly stated his views and reproofed him in a case where he was manifestly wrong. This too was a case so public and well known that Paul made his remarks before the church (ver. 14) because the church was interested in it, and because the conduct of Peter led the church into error. ¶ *Because he was to be blamed.* The word used here may either mean because he had incurred blame, or because he deserved blame. The essential idea is, that he had done wrong, and that he was by his conduct doing injury to the cause of religion.

12. *For before that certain came.* Some of the Jews who had been converted to Christianity. They evidently observed in the strictest manner the rites of the Jewish religion. ¶ *Came from James*; see Note on chap. i. 19. Whether they were sent by James, or whether they came of their own accord, is unknown. It is evident only that they had been intimate with James at Jerusalem, and



came from James, he did eat<sup>a</sup> with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 11. 3.

they doubtless pleaded his authority. James had nothing to do with the course which they pursued; but the sense of the whole passage is, that James was a leading man at Jerusalem, and that the rites of Moses were observed there. When they came down to Antioch, they of course observed those rites, and insisted that others should do it also. It is very evident that at Jerusalem the peculiar rites of the Jews were observed for a long time by those who became Christian converts. They would not at once cease to observe them, and thus needlessly shock the prejudices of their countrymen; see Notes on Acts xxi. 21—25. ¶ *He did eat with the Gentiles.* Peter had been taught that in the remarkable vision which he saw as recorded in Acts x. He had learned that God designed to break down the wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles, and he familiarly associated with them, and partook with them of their food. He evidently disregarded the peculiar laws of the Jews about meats and drinks, and partook of the common food which was in use among the Gentiles. Thus he showed his belief that all the race was henceforward to be regarded as on a level, and that the peculiar institutions of the Jews were not to be considered as binding, or to be imposed on others. ¶ *But when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself.* He withdrew from the Gentiles, and probably from the Gentile converts to Christianity. The reason why he did this is stated. He feared those who were of the circumcision, or who had been Jews. Whether they demanded this of him; whether they encountered him in debate; or whether he silently separated himself from the Gentiles without their having said any thing to him, is unknown. But he feared the effect of their opposition; he feared their reproaches; he feared the report

them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; in-

which would be made to those at Jerusalem; and perhaps he apprehended that a tumult would be excited and a persecution commenced at Antioch by the Jews who resided there. This is a melancholy illustration of Peter's characteristic trait of mind. We see in this act the same Peter who trembled when he began to sink in the waves; the same Peter who denied his Lord. Bold, ardent, zealous, and forward; he was at the same time timid and often irresolute; and he often had occasion for the deepest humility, and the most poignant regrets at the errors of his course. No one can read his history without loving his ardent and sincere attachment to his Master; and yet no one can read it without a tear of regret that he was left thus to do injury to his cause. No man loved the Saviour more sincerely than he did, yet his constitutional timidity and irresoluteness of character often led him to courses of life fitted deeply to wound his cause.

13. *And the other Jews.* That is, those who had been converted to Christianity. It is probable that they were induced to do it by the example of Peter, as they would naturally regard him as a leader. ¶ *Dissembled likewise with him.* Dissembled or concealed their true sentiments. That is, they attempted to conceal from those who had come down from James the fact that they had been in the habit of associating with the Gentiles, and of eating with them. From this it would appear that they intended to conceal this wholly from them, and that they withdrew from the Gentiles before any thing had been said to them by those who came down from James. ¶ *Insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away, &c.* Concerning Barnabas, see Note, Acts iv. 36. Barnabas was the intimate friend of Paul. He had been associated with him in very important labours; and the fact,

so much that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14 But when I saw that they  
a ver. 5.

therefore, that the conduct of Peter was exciting so unhappy an influence as even to lead so worthy and good a man as he was into hypocrisy and error, made it the more proper that Paul should publicly notice and reprove the conduct of Peter. It could not but be a painful duty, but the welfare of the church and the cause of religion demanded it, and Paul did not shrink from what was so obvious a duty.

14. *But when I saw that they walked not uprightly.* To walk, in the Scriptures, is usually expressive of conduct or deportment; and the idea here is, that their conduct in this case was not honest. ¶ *According to the truth of the gospel.* According to the true spirit and design of the gospel. That requires perfect honesty and integrity; and as that was the rule by which Paul regulated his life, and by which he felt that all ought to regulate their conduct, he felt himself called on openly to reprove the principal person who had been in fault. The spirit of the world is crafty, cunning, and crooked. The gospel would correct all that wily policy, and would lead man in a path of entire honesty and truth. ¶ *I said unto Peter before them all.* That is, probably, before all the church, or certainly before all who had offended with him in the case. Had this been a *private affair*, Paul would doubtless have sought a private interview with Peter, and would have remonstrated with him in private on the subject. But it was public. It was a case where many were involved, and where the interests of the church were at stake. It was a case where it was very important to establish some fixed and just principles, and he therefore took occasion to remonstrate with him in public on the subject. This might have been at the close of public worship; or it may have been that the subject came up for debate in some of their public meetings, whether

walked not uprightly, according to the truth <sup>a</sup> of the gospel, I said unto Peter <sup>b</sup> before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the

b 1 Ti. 5. 20.

the rites of the Jews were to be imposed on the Gentile converts. This was a question which agitated all the churches where the Jewish and Gentile converts were intermingled; and it would not be strange that it should be the subject of public debate at Antioch. The fact that Paul reprovved Peter before "them all," proves, (1.) That he regarded himself, and was so regarded by the church, as on an equality with Peter, and as having equal authority with him. (2.) That public reproof is right when an offence has been public, and when the church at large is interested, or is in danger of being led into error; comp. 1 Tim. v. 20, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." (3.) That it is a duty to reprove those who err. It is a painful duty, and one much neglected; still it is a duty often enjoined in the Scriptures, and one that is of the deepest importance to the church. He does a favour to another man who, in a kind spirit, admonishes him of his error, and reclaims him from a course of sin. He does another the deepest injury, who suffers sin unrebuked to lie upon him, and who sees him injuring himself and others, and who is at no pains to admonish him for his faults. (4.) If it is the duty of one Christian to admonish another who is an offender, and to do it in a kind spirit, it is the duty of him who has offended to *receive* the admonition in a kind spirit, and with thankfulness. Excitable as Peter was by nature, yet there is no evidence that he became angry here, or that he did not receive the admonition of his brother Paul with perfect good temper, and with an acknowledgment that Paul was right and that he was wrong. Indeed, the case was so plain,—as it usually is if men would be honest,—that he seems to have felt that it was right, and to have received the rebuke as became a Christian. Peter, unhappily, was accustomed to

manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

<sup>a</sup> Ep. 2.3, 12.

rebukes; and he was at heart too good a man to be offended when he was admonished that he had done wrong. A good man is willing to be reproved when he has erred, and it is usually proof that there is much that is wrong when we become excited and irritable if another admonishes us of our faults. It may be added here, that nothing should be inferred from this in regard to the *inspiration* or apostolic authority of Peter. The fault was not that he taught error of *doctrine*, but that he sinned in *conduct*. Inspiration, though it kept the apostles from teaching *error*, did not keep them necessarily from sin. A man may always *teach* the truth, and yet be far from perfection in practice. The case here proves that Peter was not perfect, a fact proved by his whole life; it proves that he was sometimes timid, and even, for a period, time-serving, but it does not prove that what he wrote for our guidance was false and erroneous. ¶ *If thou, being a Jew.* A Jew by birth. ¶ *Livest after the manner of the Gentiles.* In eating, &c., as he had done before the Judaizing teachers came from Jerusalem, ver. 12. ¶ *And not as do the Jews.* Observing their peculiar customs, and their distinctions of meats and drinks. ¶ *Why compellest thou the Gentiles, &c.* As he would do, if he insisted that they should be circumcised, and observe the peculiar Jewish rites. The charge against him was gross inconsistency in doing this. "Is it not at least as lawful for them to neglect the Jewish observances, as it was for thee to do it but a few days ago?"—*Doddridge*. The word here rendered "compellest," means here *moral* compulsion or persuasion. The idea is, that the conduct of Peter was such as to lead the Gentiles to the belief that it was necessary for them to be circumcised in order to be saved. For a similar use of the word, see Mat.

15 We *who are Jews by nature*, and not sinners <sup>a</sup> of the Gentiles,

16 Knowing that <sup>b</sup> a man is

<sup>b</sup> Ac. 13.38, 39; Ro. 3.20.

xiv. 22; Luke xiv. 23; Acts xxviii 19.

15. *We who are Jews by nature.* It has long been a question whether this and the following verses are to be regarded as a part of the address of Paul to Peter, or the words of Paul as a part of the epistle to the Galatians. A great variety of opinion has prevailed in regard to this. Grotius says, "Here the narrative of Paul being closed, he pursues his argument to the Galatians." In this opinion Bloomfield and many others concur. Rosenmüller and many others suppose that the address to Peter is continued to ver. 21. Such *seems* to be the most obvious interpretation, as there is no break or change in the style, nor any vestige of a transfer of the argument to the Galatians. But, on the other hand, it may be urged, (1.) That Paul in his writings often changes his mode of address without indicating it.—*Bloomfield*. (2.) That it is rather improbable that he should have gone into so long a discourse with Peter on the subject of justification. His purpose was answered by the reproof of Peter for his dissimulation; and there is something incongruous, it is said, in his instructing Peter at such length on the subject of man's justification. Still it appears to me probable that this is to be regarded as a part of the discourse of Paul to Peter, to the close of ver. 21. The following reasons seem to me to require this interpretation:—(1.) It is the most natural and obvious—usually a safe rule of interpretation. The discourse proceeds *as if* it were an address to Peter. (2.) There is a change at the beginning of the next chapter, where Paul expressly addresses himself to the Galatians. (3.) As to the impropriety of Paul's addressing Peter at length on the subject of justification, we are to bear in mind that he did not address him *alone*. The *reproof* was addressed to Peter particularly,

not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith <sup>a</sup> of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be

<sup>a</sup> Ro. 5. 1; chap. 3. 11, 24.

but it was "before them all" (ver. 14); that is, before the assembled church, or before the persons who had been led astray by the conduct of Peter, and who were in danger of error on the subject of justification. Nothing, therefore, was more proper than for Paul to continue his discourse for *their* benefit, and to state to them fully the doctrine of justification. And nothing was more pertinent or proper for him now than to report this to the Galatians as a part of his argument to them, showing that he had *always*, since his conversion, held and defended the same doctrine on the subject of the way in which men are to be justified in the sight of God. It is, therefore, I apprehend, to be regarded as an address to Peter and the other Jews who were present. "We who were born Jews." ¶ *By nature.* By birth; or, we were born Jews. We were not born in the condition of the Gentiles. ¶ *And not sinners of the Gentiles.* This cannot mean that Paul did not regard the Jews as sinners, for his views on that subject he has fully expressed in Rom. ii. iii. But it must mean that the Jews were not born under the disadvantages of the Gentiles in regard to the true knowledge of the way of salvation. They were not left wholly in ignorance about the way of justification, as the Gentiles were. They knew, or they might know, that men could not be saved by their own works. It was also true that they were under more restraint than the Gentiles were, and though they were sinners, yet they were not abandoned to so gross and open sensuality as was the heathen world. They were not idolaters, and wholly ignorant of the law of God.

16. *Knowing.* We who are Jews by nature, or by birth. This cannot mean that *all* the Jews knew this, or that he who was a Jew knew it as a matter of course, for many Jews were ignorant of it, and many opposed it.

justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for <sup>b</sup> by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 143. 2; He. 7. 18, 19.

But it means that the persons here referred to, those who had been born Jews, and who had been converted to Christianity, had had an opportunity to learn and understand this, which the Gentiles had not. This gospel had been preached to them, and they had professedly embraced it. They were not left to the gross darkness and ignorance on this subject which pervaded the heathen world, and they had had a better opportunity to learn it than the converts from the Gentiles. They ought, therefore, to act in a manner becoming their superior light, and to show in all their conduct that they fully believed that a man could not be justified by obedience to the law of Moses. This rendered the conduct of Peter and the other Jews who "dissembled" with him so entirely inexcusable. They could not plead ignorance on this vital subject, and yet they were pursuing a course, the tendency of which was to lead the Gentile converts to believe that it was indispensable to observe the laws of Moses, in order to be justified and saved. ¶ *That a man is not justified by the works of the law;* see Notes on Rom. i. 17; iii. 20, 26; iv. 5. ¶ *But by the faith of Jesus Christ.* By believing on Jesus Christ; see Notes, Mark xvi. 16; Rom. iii. 22. ¶ *Even we have believed in Jesus Christ.* We are therefore justified. The object of Paul here seems to be to show, that as they had believed in the Lord Jesus, and thus had been justified, there was no necessity of obeying the law of Moses with any view to justification. The thing had been fully done without the deeds of the law, and it was now unreasonable and unnecessary to insist on the observance of the Mosaic rites. ¶ *For by the works of the law, &c;* see Notes on Rom. iii. 20, 27. In this verse, the apostle has stated in few words the important doctrine of justification by faith—the doctrine which

Luther so justly called, *Articulus stantis, vel cadentis ecclesie*. In the notes referred to above, particularly in the Notes on the Epistle to the Romans, I have stated in various places what I conceive to be the true doctrine on this important subject. It may be useful, however, to throw together in one connected view, as briefly as possible, the leading ideas on the subject of justification, as it is revealed in the gospel. I. Justification is properly a word applicable to courts of justice, but is used in a similar sense in common conversation among men. An illustration will show its nature. A man is charged, *e. g.* with an act of trespass on his neighbour's property. Now there are two ways which he may take to *justify himself*, or to meet the charge, so as to be regarded and treated as innocent. He may, (a) Either *deny* that he performed the act charged on him, or he may, (b) Admit that the deed was done, and set up as a defence, that he *had a right* to do it. In either case, if the point be made out, he will be *just* or *innocent* in the sight of the law. The law will have nothing against him, and he will be regarded and treated in the premises as an innocent man; or he has justified himself in regard to the charge brought against him. II. Charges of a very serious nature are brought against man by his Maker. He is charged with violating the law of God; with a want of love to his Maker; with a corrupt, proud, sensual heart; with being entirely alienated from God by wicked works; in one word, with being entirely depraved. This charge extends to all men; and to the entire life of every unrenewed man. It is not a charge merely affecting the external conduct, nor merely affecting the heart; it is a charge of entire alienation from God; a charge, in short, of total depravity; see, especially, Rom. i., ii., iii. That this charge is a very serious one, no one can doubt. That it deeply affects the human character and standing, is as clear. It is a charge brought in the Bible; and God appeals in proof of it to the history of the world, to every

man's conscience, and to the life of every one who has lived; and on these facts, and on his own power in searching the hearts, and in knowing what is in man, he rests the proofs of the charge. III. It is impossible for man to vindicate himself from this charge. *He can neither show that the things charged have not been committed, nor that, having been committed, he had a right to do them.* He cannot prove that God is not right in all the charges which he has made against him in his word; and he cannot prove that it was right for him to do as he has done. The charges against him are facts which are undeniable, and the facts are such as cannot be vindicated. But if he can do neither of these things, then he cannot be justified by the law. The law will not acquit him. It holds him guilty. It condemns him. No argument which he can use will show that he is right, and that God is wrong. No works that he can perform will be any compensation for what he has already done. No denial of the existence of the facts charged will alter the case; and he must stand condemned by the law of God. In the legal sense he cannot be justified; and justification, if it ever exist at all, must be in a mode that is a departure from the regular operation of law, and in a mode which the law did not contemplate, for no law makes any provision for the *pardon* of those who violate it. It must be by some system which is distinct from the law, and in which man may be justified on different principles than those which the law contemplates. IV. This other system of justification is that which is revealed in the gospel by the faith of the Lord Jesus. It does not consist in either of the following things. (1.) It is *not* a system or plan where the Lord Jesus takes the part of the sinner *against* the law or *against* God. He did not come to show that the sinner was right, and that God was wrong. He admitted most fully, and endeavoured constantly to show, that God was right, and that the sinner was wrong; nor can an instance be referred to where the Saviour took the part of the sin-

ner against God in any such sense that he endeavoured to show that the sinner had not done the things charged on him, or that he had a right to do them. (2.) It is not that we *are* either innocent, or are declared to be innocent. God justifies the "ungodly," Rom. iv. 5. We are not innocent; we never have been; we never shall be; and it is not the design of the scheme to declare any such *untruth* as that we are not personally undeserving. It will be *always* true that the justified sinner has no claims to the mercy and favour of God. (3.) It is not that we cease to be undeserving personally. He that is justified by faith, and that goes to heaven, will go there admitting that he *deserves* eternal death, and that he is saved wholly by favour and not by desert. (4.) It is *not* a declaration on the part of God that *we* have wrought out salvation, or that *we* have any claim for what the Lord Jesus has done. Such a declaration would not be true, and would not be made. (5.) It is not that the righteousness of the Lord Jesus is *transferred* to his people. Moral character cannot be transferred. It adheres to the moral agent as much as colour does to the rays of light which cause it. It is not true that *we* died for sin, and it cannot be so reckoned or imputed. It is not true that *we* have any merit, or any claim, and it cannot be so reckoned or imputed. All the imputations of God are according to truth; and he will always reckon us to be personally undeserving and sinful. But if justification be none of these things, it may be asked, what is it? I answer—*It is the declared purpose of God to regard and treat those sinners who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as if they had not sinned, on the ground of the merits of the Saviour.* It is not mere pardon. The main difference between pardon and justification respects the sinner contemplated in regard to his *past* conduct, and to God's *future dealings* with him. Pardon is a free forgiveness of past offences. It has reference to those sins *as* forgiven and blotted out. It is an act of remission on the part of God. Justifi-

cation has respect to the law, and to God's *future dealings* with the sinner. It is an act by which God determines to treat him hereafter *as* a righteous man, or *as if* he had not sinned. The ground or reason of this is, the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ; merit such that we can plead it *as if* it were our own. The *rationale* of it is, that the Lord Jesus has accomplished by his death the same happy effects in regard to the law and the government of God, which would have been accomplished by the death of the sinner himself. In other words, nothing would be gained to the universe by the everlasting punishment of the offender himself, which will not be secured by his salvation on the ground of the death of the Lord Jesus. He has taken our place, and died in our stead; and he has met the descending stroke of justice, which would have fallen on our own head if he had not interposed (see my Notes on Isa. liii.). and now the great interests of justice will be as firmly secured if we are saved, as they would be if we were lost. The law has been fully obeyed by one who came to save us, and *as much* honour has been done to it by his obedience as could have been by our own; that is, it *as much* shows that the law is *worthy* of obedience to have it perfectly obeyed by the Lord Jesus, as it would if it were obeyed by us. It *as much* shows that the law of a sovereign is worthy of obedience to have it obeyed by an only son and an heir to the crown, as it does to have it obeyed by his subjects. And it has *as much* shown the evil of the violation of the law to have the Lord Jesus suffer death on the cross, as it would if the guilty had died themselves. If transgression whelm the innocent in calamity; if it extends to those who are perfectly *guiltless*, and inflicts pain and woe on them, it is as certainly an expression of the evil of transgression *as if* the guilty themselves suffer. And an impression as deep has been made of the evil of sin by the sufferings of the Lord Jesus in our stead, *as if* we had suffered ourselves. He endured on the cross as intense agony as we can conceive it

possible for a sinner ever to endure; and the dignity of the person who suffered, THE INCARNATE GOD, is more than an equivalent for the more lengthened sorrows which the penalty of the law exacts in hell. Besides, from the very dignity of the sufferer in our place, an impression has gone abroad on the universe more deep and important than would have been by the sufferings of the individual himself in the world of woe. The sinner who is lost will be unknown to other worlds. His *name* may be unheard beyond the gates of the prison of despair. The *impression* which will be made on distant worlds by his individual sufferings will be as a part of the *aggregate of woe*, and his individual sorrows may make *no* impression on distant worlds. But not so with him who took our place. He stood in the centre of the universe. The sun grew dark, and the dead arose, and angels gazed upon the scene, and from his cross an *impression* went abroad to the farthest part of the universe, showing the tremendous effects of the violation of law, when not one soul could be saved from its penalty without such sorrows of the Son of God. In virtue of all this, the offender, by believing on him, may be treated *as if* he had not sinned; and this constitutes justification. God admits him to favour *as if* he had himself obeyed the law, or borne its penalty, since as many good results will now follow from his salvation as could be derived from his punishment; and since all the additional happy results will follow which can be derived from the exercise of pardoning mercy. The character of God is thus revealed. His mercy is shown. His determination to maintain his law is evinced. The truth is maintained; and yet he shows the fulness of his mercy and the richness of his benevolence.

[The reader will find the above objections to the doctrine of imputation fully considered in the supplementary Notes on Rom. iv. 5; see especially the Note on Rom. iv. 3, in which it is observed, that almost every objection against the imputation of righteousness may be traced to two sources. The first of

these is the idea that Christ's righteousness becomes ours, in the same sense that it is his, viz., of personal achievement; an idea continually rejected by the friends, and as often proceeded on by the enemies, of imputation. The second source is the idea that imputation involves a transference of moral character, whereas the *imputing* and the *infusing* of righteousness are allowed to be two very different things. Now, in this place, the commentator manifestly proceeds on these mistaken views. What does he mean by "transference of the righteousness of Christ" when he says, "justification is not that the righteousness of the Lord Jesus is transferred to his people?" What follows, at once explains. "Moral character," he continues, "cannot be transferred. It adheres to the moral agent, as much as colour does to the rays of light which cause it." But this is quite aside from the subject, and proves what never had been denied. The same remarks apply with equal force to what is said about our being "always personally undeserving," and never regarded as having ourselves actually "wrought out salvation." These objections belong to the first source of misconception noticed above.

It has been asked a thousand times, and the question is most pertinent, How can God treat believers as innocent, if there be not some sense in which they are so? "The imputations of God are according to truth," so is his treatment. The author tells us, that the ground of justification is the "merits of the Saviour," which phrase he prefers throughout, to the more scriptural and more appropriate one of the righteousness of Christ; more appropriate, because the subject is forensic, belonging to judicature and dealing in matters of law; see Hervey's reply to Wesley, vol. iv. p. 33. Yet if these merits, or this righteousness, be not imputed to us—held as ours—*how can we be justified on any such ground?* "I would further observe," says Mr. Hervey, replying to Wesley in the publication just quoted, "that you have dropt the word imputed," which inclines me to suspect you would cashier the thing. But let me ask, Sir, how can we be justified by the merits of Christ, unless they are imputed to us? Would the payment made by a surety procure a discharge for the debtor, unless it were placed to his account? It is certain the sacrifices of old could not make an atonement, unless they were imputed to each offerer respectively. This was an ordinance settled by Jehovah himself, Lev. vii. 18. And were not the sacrifices, was not their imputation, typical of Christ and things pertaining to Christ, the former prefiguring his all-sufficient expiation; the latter shadowing forth the way whereby we are partakers of its efficacy?

The language of President Edwards, the prince of American divines, indeed of theolo-

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we <sup>a</sup> ourselves  
a 1 John 3.9,10.

gians universally, is decisive enough, and one would think that the opinion of this master in reasoning should have its weight on the other side of the Atlantic. "It is absolutely necessary," says he, "that in order to a sinner's being justified, the righteousness of some other should be reckoned to his account; for it is declared, that the person justified is looked on as, in himself, ungodly: but God neither will nor can justify a person without a righteousness; for justification is manifestly a forensic term, as the word is used in scripture, and a judicial thing or the act of a judge; so that if a person should be justified without a righteousness, the judgment would not be according to truth. The sentence of justification would be a false sentence, unless there be a righteousness performed, that is, by the judge properly looked upon as his."

Nor are we sure, if our authors' distinction between pardon and justification be altogether accurate. By those who deny imputed righteousness, justification is frequently said to consist in the mere remission of sin. In a recent American publication, the views of the "new school party" are thus given: "Though they retain the word justification, they make it consist in mere pardon. In the eye of the law, the believer, according to their views, is not justified at all, and never will be throughout eternity. Though on the ground of what Christ has done, God is pleased to forgive the sinner upon his believing, Christ's righteousness is not reckoned in any sense as his, or set down to his account. He believes, and his faith or act of believing is accounted to him for righteousness; that is, faith is so reckoned to his account that God treats him as if he were righteous."—*Old and New Theology*, by James Wood. Now Mr. Barnes does not exactly say that justification and pardon are the same, for he makes a distinction. "The main difference between the two respects the sinner contemplated in regard to his past conduct, and to God's future dealings with him." "Pardon is a free forgiveness of past offences. Justification has respect to the law and to God's future dealings." But this difference is not respecting the nature of the things. It is simply a matter of time, of past and future; and justification, after all, is neither more nor less than pardon of sins past and to come. A criminal is often pardoned while yet his guilt is allowed. To exalt pardon to justification, there must be supposed a righteousness, on the ground of which not only is sin forgiven, but the person accepted and declared legally righteous. And in this lies the main difference between the two. In the case of the believer however these are never found

apart. Whoever is pardoned is at the same time justified. Earthly princes sometimes remit the punishment of crime, but seldom or never dream of honouring the criminal; but wherever God pardons, he dignifies and ennobles.]

17. *But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ.* The connection here is not very clear, and the sense of the verse is somewhat obscure. Rosenmüller supposes that this is an objection of a Jew, supposing that where the law of Moses is not observed there is no rule of life, and that therefore there must be sin; and that since the doctrine of justification by faith taught that there was no necessity of obeying the ceremonial law of Moses, therefore Christ, who had introduced that system, must be regarded as the author and encourager of sin. To me it seems probable that Paul here has reference to an objection which has in all ages been brought against the doctrine of justification by faith, and which seems to have existed in his time, that the doctrine leads to licentiousness. The objections are, that it does not teach the necessity of the observance of the law in order to acceptance with God. That it pronounces a man justified and accepted who is a violator of the law. That his acceptance does not depend on moral character. That it releases him from the obligation of law, and that it teaches that a man may be saved though he does not conform to law. These objections existed early, and have been found everywhere where the doctrine of justification by faith has been preached. I regard this verse, therefore, as referring to these objections, and not as being peculiarly the objection of a Jew. The idea is, "You seek to be justified by faith without obeying the law. You professedly reject that, and do not hold that it is necessary to yield obedience to it. If now it shall turn out that you are sinners; that your lives are not holy; that you are free from the wholesome restraint of the law, and are given up to lives of sin, will it not follow that Christ is



also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

a Ro.7.4,10; 8.2.

b Ro.6.11,14.

the cause of it; that he taught it; and that the system which he introduced is responsible for it? And is not the gospel therefore responsible for introducing a system that frees from the restraint of the law, and introduces universal licentiousness?" To this Paul replies by stating distinctly that the gospel has no such tendency, and particularly by referring in the following verses to his own case, and to the effect of the doctrine of justification on his own heart and life. ¶ *We ourselves are found sinners.* If it turns out that we are sinners, or if others discover by undoubted demonstration that we lead lives of sin; if they see us given up to a lawless life, and find us practising all kinds of evil; if it shall be seen not only that we are not pardoned and made better by the gospel, but are actually made worse, and are freed from all moral restraint. ¶ *Is therefore Christ the minister of sin?* Is it to be traced to him? Is it a fair and legitimate conclusion that this is the tendency of the gospel? Is it to be charged on him, and on the plan of justification through him, that a lax morality prevails, and that men are freed from the wholesome restraints of law? ¶ *God forbid.* It is not so. This is not the proper effect of the gospel of Christ, and of the doctrine of justification by faith. The system is not fitted to produce such a freedom from restraint, and if such a freedom exists, it is to be traced to something else than the gospel.

18. *For if I build again the things which I destroyed.* Paul here uses the first person; but he evidently intends it as a general proposition, and means that if *any one* does it he becomes a transgressor. The sense is, that if a man, having removed or destroyed that which was evil, again introduces it or establishes it, he does wrong, and is a transgressor of the

19 For I <sup>a</sup> through the law am dead to the law, that I might live <sup>b</sup> unto God.

20 I am crucified <sup>c</sup> with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in <sup>d</sup> me; and the

c chap.5.24; 6.14.

d 1 Th.5.10; 1 Pe.4.2.

law of God. The particular application here, as it seems to me, is to the subject of circumcision and the other rites of the Mosaic law. They had been virtually abolished by the coming of the Redeemer, and by the doctrine of justification by faith. It had been seen that there was no necessity for their observance, and of that Peter and the others had been fully aware. Yet they were lending their influence again to establish them or to "build" them up again. They complied with them, and they insisted on the necessity of their observance. Their conduct, therefore, was that of building up again that which had once been destroyed, destroyed by the ministry, and toils, and death of the Lord Jesus, and by the fair influence of his gospel. To rebuild that again; to re-establish those customs, was wrong, and now involved the guilt of a transgression of the law of God. Doddridge supposes that this is an address to the Galatians, and that the address to Peter closed at the previous verse. But it is impossible to determine this; and it seems to me more probable that this is all a part of the address to Peter; or rather perhaps to the assembly when Peter was present; see Note on ver. 15.

19. *For I through the law.* On this passage the commentators are by no means agreed. It is agreed that in the phrase "am dead to the law," the law of Moses is referred to, and that the meaning is, that Paul had become dead to that as a ground or means of justification. He acted as though it were not; or it ceased to have influence over him. A dead man is insensible to all around him. He hears nothing; sees nothing; and nothing affects him. So when we are said to be dead to any thing, the meaning is, that it does not have an influence over us. In this sense Paul

life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself <sup>a</sup> for me.

<sup>a</sup> John 10.11; Ep.5.2.

was dead to the law of Moses. He ceased to observe it as a ground of justification. It ceased to be the grand aim and purpose of his life, as it had been formerly, to obey it. He had higher purposes than that, and truly lived to God; see Note, Rom. vi. 2. But on the meaning of the phrase "through the law" (*διὰ νόμου*) there has been a great variety of opinion. Bloomfield, Rosenmüller, and some others suppose that he means the Christian religion, and that the meaning is, "by one law, or doctrine, I am dead to another;" that is, the Christian doctrine has caused me to cast aside the Mosaic religion. Doddridge, Clarke, Chandler, and most others, however, suppose that he here refers to the law of Moses, and that the meaning is, that by contemplating the true character of the law of Moses itself; by considering its nature and design; by understanding the extent of its requisitions, he had become dead to it; that is, he had laid aside all expectations of being justified by it. This seems to me to be the correct interpretation. Paul had formerly expected to be justified by the law. He had endeavoured to obey it. It had been the object of his life to comply with all its requisitions in order to be saved by it; Phil. iii. 4—6. But all this while he had not fully understood its nature; and when he was made fully to feel and comprehend its spiritual requirements, then all his hopes of justification by it died, and he became dead to it; see this sentiment more fully explained in the Note on Rom. vii. 9. ¶ *That I might live unto God.* That I might be truly alive, and might be found engaged in his service. He was dead to the law, but not to every thing. He had not become literally inactive and insensible to all things, like a dead man, but he had become truly sensible to the commands and appeals of God, and had consecrated himself to his service; see Note, Rom. vi. 11.

20. *I am crucified with Christ.* In

the previous verse, Paul had said that he was *dead*. In this verse he states what he meant by it, and shows that he did not wish to be understood as saying that he was inactive, or that he was literally insensible to the appeals made to him by other beings and objects. In respect to one thing he was dead; to all that was truly great and noble he was alive. To understand the remarkable phrase, "I am crucified with Christ," we may remark, (1.) That this was the way in which Christ was put to death. He suffered on a cross, and thus became literally dead. (2.) In a sense *similar* to this, Paul became dead to the law, to the world, and to sin. The Redeemer by the death of the cross became insensible to all surrounding objects, as the dead always are. He ceased to see, and hear, and was as though they were not. He was laid in the cold grave, and they did not affect or influence him. So Paul says that *he* became insensible to the law as a means of justification; to the world; to ambition and the love of money; to the pride and pomp of life, and to the dominion of evil and hateful passions. They lost their power over him; they ceased to influence him. (3.) This was *with* Christ, or *by* Christ. It cannot mean *literally* that he was put to death with him, for that is not true. But it means that the effect of the death of Christ on the cross was to make him dead to these things, in like manner as he, when he died, became insensible to the things of this busy world. This may include the following things. (a) There was an *intimate union* between Christ and his people, so that what affected *him*, affected *them*; see John xv. 5, 6. (b) The death of the Redeemer on the cross involved as a consequence the death of his people to the world and to sin; see chap. v. 24; vi. 14. It was like a blow at the root of a vine or a tree, which would affect every branch and tendril or like a blow at

the head which affects every member of the body. (c) Paul felt *identified* with the Lord Jesus; and he was willing to share in all the ignominy and contempt which was connected with the idea of the crucifixion. He was willing to regard himself as one with the Redeemer. If there was disgrace attached to the manner in which he died, he was willing to share it with him. He regarded it as a matter to be greatly desired to be made *just like Christ* in all things, and even in the manner of his death. This idea he has more fully expressed in Phil. iii. 10, "That I may know him, [i. e. I desire earnestly to know him,] and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, *being made conformable unto his death*;" see also Col. i. 24; comp. 1 Pet. iv. 13. ¶ *Nevertheless I live*. This expression is added, as in ver. 19, to prevent the possibility of mistake. Paul, though he was crucified with Christ, did not wish to be understood that he felt himself to be *dead*. He was not inactive; not insensible, as the dead are, to the appeals which are made from God, or to the great objects which ought to interest an immortal mind. He was still actively employed, and the more so from the fact that he was crucified with Christ. The object of all such expressions as this is, to show that it was no design of the gospel to make men inactive, or to annihilate their energies. It was not to cause men to do nothing. It was not to paralyse their powers, or stifle their own efforts. Paul, therefore, says, "I am not dead. I am truly alive; and I live a better life than I did before." Paul was *as* active after conversion as he was before. Before, he was engaged in persecution; now, he devoted his great talents with as much energy, and with as untiring zeal, to the cause of the great Redeemer. Indeed the whole narrative would lead us to suppose that he was *more* active and zealous *after* his conversion than he was before. The effect of religion is not to make one dead in regard to the putting forth of the energies of the soul. True religion never made one

lazy man; it has converted many a man of indolence, and effeminacy, and self-indulgence to a man actively engaged in doing good. If a professor of religion is *less* active in the service of God than he was in the service of the world; less laborious, and zealous, and ardent than he was before his supposed conversion, he ought to set it down as full proof that he is an utter stranger to true religion. ¶ *Yet not I*. This is also designed to prevent misapprehension. In the previous clause he had said that he lived, or was actively engaged. But lest this should be misunderstood, and it should be inferred that he meant to say it was by his own energy or powers, he guards it, and says it was not at all from himself. It was by no native tendency; no power of his own; nothing that could be traced to himself. He assumed no credit for any zeal which he had shown in the true life. He was disposed to trace it all to another. He had ample proof in his past experience that there was no tendency in himself to a life of true religion, and he therefore traced it all to another. ¶ *Christ liveth in me*. Christ was the *source* of all the life that he had. Of course this cannot be taken literally that Christ had a residence in the apostle, but it must mean that his grace resided in him; that his principles actuated him; and that he derived all his energy, and zeal, and life from his grace. The union between the Lord Jesus and the disciple was so close that it might be said the one lived in the other. So the juices of the vine are in each branch, and leaf, and tendril, and live in them and animate them; the vital energy of the brain is in each delicate nerve—no matter how small—that is found in any part of the human frame. Christ was in him as it were the vital principle. All his life and energy were derived from him. ¶ *And the life which I now live in the flesh*. As I now live on the earth surrounded by the cares and anxieties of this life. I carry the life-giving principles of my religion to all my duties and all my trials. ¶ *I live by the faith of the Son of God*. By confidence in the

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if <sup>a</sup> righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

<sup>a</sup> He. 7. 11.

Son of God, looking to him for strength, and trusting in his promises, and in his grace. *Who loved me, &c.* He felt under the highest obligation to him from the fact that he had loved him, and given himself to the death of the cross in his behalf. The conviction of obligation on this account Paul often expresses; see Notes on Rom. vi. 8—11; Rom. viii. 35—39; 2 Cor. v. 15. There is no higher sense of obligation than that which is felt towards the Saviour; and Paul felt himself bound, as we should, to live entirely to him who had redeemed him by his blood.

21. *I do not frustrate the grace of God.* The word rendered "frustrate" (*ἀναιρῶ*) means properly to displace, abrogate, abolish; then to make void, to render null; Mark vii. 9; Luke vii. 30; 1 Cor. i. 19. The phrase "the grace of God," here refers to the favour of God manifested in the plan of salvation by the gospel, and is another name for the gospel. The sense is, that Paul would not take any measures or pursue any course that would render that vain or inefficacious. Neither by his own life, by a course of conduct which would show that it had no influence over the heart and conduct, nor by the observance of Jewish rites and customs, would he do any thing to render that inefficacious. The design is to show that he regarded it as a great principle that the gospel was efficacious in renewing and saving man, and he would do nothing that would tend to prevent that impression on mankind. A life of sin, of open depravity and licentiousness, would do that. And in like manner a conformity to the rites of Moses as a ground of justification would tend to frustrate the grace of God, or to render the method of salvation solely by the Redeemer nugatory. This is to be regarded, therefore as at the same time a reproof of Peter for complying with customs which tended to frustrate the plan of

### CHAPTER III.

O FOOLISH <sup>b</sup> Galatians, who <sup>c</sup> hath bewitched you, that

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 7. 26.

<sup>c</sup> chap. 5. 7.

the gospel, and a declaration that he intended that his own course of life should be such as to confirm the plan, and show its efficacy in pardoning the sinner and rendering him alive in the service of God. ¶ *For if righteousness come by the law.* If justification can be secured by the observance of any law—ceremonial or moral—then there was no need of the death of Christ as an atonement. This is plain. If man by conformity to any law could be justified before God, what need was there of an atonement? The work would then have been wholly in his own power, and the merit would have been his. It follows from this, that man cannot be justified by his own morality, or his alms-deeds, or his forms of religion, or his honesty and integrity. If he can, he needs no Saviour, he can save himself. It follows also that when men depend on their own amiableness, and morality, and good works, they would feel no need of a Saviour; and this is the true reason why the mass of men reject the Lord Jesus. They suppose they do not deserve to be sent to hell. They have no deep sense of guilt. They confide in their own integrity, and feel that God *ought* to save them. Hence they feel no need of a Saviour; for why should a man in health employ a physician? And confiding in their own righteousness, they reject the grace of God, and despise the plan of justification through the Redeemer. To feel the need of a Saviour it is necessary to feel that we are lost and ruined sinners; that we have no merit on which we can rely; and that we are entirely dependent on the mercy of God for salvation. Thus feeling, we shall receive the salvation of the gospel with thankfulness and joy, and show that in regard to us Christ is not "dead in vain."

### CHAPTER III.

#### ANALYSIS.

THE address of Paul to Peter, as I suppose, was closed at the last verse

ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath

been evidently set forth, crucified among you ?

of chapter ii. The apostle in this chapter, in a direct address to the Galatians, pursues the argument on the subject of justification by faith. In the previous chapters he had shown them fully that he had received his views of the gospel directly from the Lord Jesus, and that he had the concurrence of the most eminent among the apostles themselves. He proceeds to state more fully what his views were ; to confirm them by the authority of the Old Testament ; and to show the necessary effect of an observance of the laws of Moses on the great doctrine of justification by faith. This subject is pursued through this chapter and the following. This chapter comprises the following subjects.

(1.) A severe reproof of the Galatians for having been so easily seduced by the arts of cunning men from the simplicity of the gospel, ver. 1. He says that Christ had been plainly set forth crucified among them, and it was strange that they had so soon been led astray from the glorious doctrine of salvation by faith.

(2.) He appeals to them to show that the great benefits which *they* had received had not been in consequence of the observance of the Mosaic rites, but had come solely by the hearing of the gospel, ver. 2—5. Particularly the Holy Spirit, with all his miraculous and converting and sanctifying influences, had been imparted only in connection with the gospel. This was the most rich and most valuable endowment which they had ever received ; and this was solely by the preaching of Christ and him crucified.

(3.) In illustration of the doctrine of justification by faith, and in proof of the truth of it, he refers to the case of Abraham, and shows that he was justified in this manner, and that the scripture had promised that others would be justified in the same way, ver. 6—9.

(4.) He shows that the law pronounced a curse on all those who were under it, and that consequently it was

impossible to be justified by it. But Christ had redeemed us from that curse, having taken the curse on himself, so that now we might be justified in the sight of God. In this way, says he, the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, and they all might be saved in the same manner that he was, ver. 10—14.

(5.) This view he confirms by showing that the promise made to Abraham was made *before* the giving of the law. It was a mode of justification in existence *before* the law of Moses was given. It was of the nature of a solemn compact or covenant on the part of God. It referred particularly to the Messiah, and to the mode of justification in him. And as it was of the nature of a covenant, it was impossible that the law given many years after could disannul it, or render it void, ver. 15—18.

(6.) It might then be asked, what was the use of the law ? Why was it given ? It was *added*, Paul says, on account of transgressions, and was designed to restrain men from sin, and to show them their guilt. It was, further, not *superior* to the promise of a Mediator, or to the Mediator, for it was appointed by the instrumentality of *angels*, and it was in the hand of the Mediator himself, *under him*, and subject to him. It could not therefore be *superior* to him, and to the plan of justification through him, ver. 19, 20.

(7.) Yet Paul answers an important objection here, and a very obvious and material inquiry. It is, whether he means to teach that the law of God is contradictory to his promises ? Whether the law and the gospel are rival systems ? Whether it is necessary, in order to hold to the excellency of the one to hold that the other is contradictory, evil, and worthless ? To all this he answers ; and says, by no means. He says the fault was not in the law. The view which he had taken, and which was revealed in the Bible, arose from the nature of the case. The law was as good a law

as could be made, and it answered all the purposes of law. It was *so* excellent, that if it had been possible that men could be justified by law at all, that was the law by which it would have been done. But it was not possible. The effect of the law, therefore, was to show that all men were sinners, and to shut them up to the plan of justification by the work of a Redeemer. It was appointed, therefore, not to justify men, but to lead them to the Saviour, ver. 21—24.

(8.) The effect of the plan of justification by faith in the Lord Jesus was to make the mind free. It was no longer under a schoolmaster. They who are justified in this way become the children of God. They all become one in the Redeemer. There is neither Jew nor Greek, but they constitute one great family, and are the children of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise, ver. 25—29.

1. *O foolish Galatians.* That is, foolish for having yielded to the influence of the false teachers, and for having embraced doctrines that tended to subvert the gospel of the Redeemer. The original word here used (*ἀόνοτοι*) denotes void of understanding; and they had shown it in a remarkable manner in rejecting the doctrine of the apostles, and in embracing the errors into which they had fallen. It will be remembered that this is an expression similar to what was applied to them by others; see the Introduction, § I. Thus Calimachus in his hymns calls them "a foolish people," and Hillary, himself a Gaul, calls them *Gallos indociles*, expressions remarkably in accordance with that used here by Paul. It is implied that they were without stability of character. The particular thing to which Paul refers here is, that they were so easily led astray by the arguments of the false teachers. ¶ *Who hath bewitched you.* The word here used (*ἰβάναν*) properly means, to prate about any one; and then to mislead by pretences, as if by magic arts; to fascinate; to influence by a charm. The idea here is, that they had not been led by *reason* and by *sober judgment*, but that there

must have been some charm or fascination to have taken them away in this manner from what they had embraced as true, and what they had the fullest evidence was true. Paul had sufficient confidence in them to believe that they had not embraced their present views under the unbiassed influence of judgment and reason, but that there must have been some fascination or charm by which it was done. It was in fact accomplished by the arts and the plausible pretences of those who came from among the Jews. ¶ *That ye should not obey the truth.* The truth of the gospel. That you should yield your minds to falsehood and error. It should be observed, however, that this phrase is wanting in many MSS. It is omitted in the Syriac version; and many of the most important Greek and Latin Fathers omit it. Mill thinks it should be omitted; and Griesbach has omitted it. It is not essential to the passage in order to the sense; and it conveys no truth which is not elsewhere taught fully. It is apparently added to show what was the effect of their being bewitched or enchanted. ¶ *Before whose eyes.* In whose very presence. That is, it has been done so clearly that you may be said to have *seen* it. ¶ *Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth.* By the preaching of the gospel. He has been so fully and plainly preached that you may be said to have seen him. The effect of his being preached in the manner in which it has been done, ought to have been as great as if you had seen him crucified before your eyes. The word rendered "hath been evidently set forth" (*πενυεῖσθαι*), means properly *to write before*; and then to announce beforehand in writing; or *to announce by posting up on a tablet*. The meaning here is, probably, that Christ has been announced among them crucified, as if the doctrine was set forth in a public written tablet—*Robinson's Lex.* There was the utmost clearness and distinctness of view, so that they need not make any mistake in regard to him. The Syriac renders it, "Christ has been crucified before your eyes as if he had been represented by paint-

2 This only would I learn of you, Received<sup>a</sup> ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or <sup>b</sup> by the hearing of faith?

<sup>a</sup> Ep. 1.13.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. 10.17.

ing." According to this, the idea is, that it was as plain as if there had been a representation of him by a picture. This has been done chiefly by preaching. I see no reason, however, to doubt that Paul means also to include the celebration of the Lord's supper, in which the Lord Jesus is so clearly exhibited as a crucified Saviour. ¶ *Crucified among you.* That is, represented among you as crucified. The words "among you," however, are wanting in many MSS. and obscure the sense. If they are to be retained, the meaning is, that the representations of the Lord Jesus as crucified had been as clear and impressive among them as if they had seen him with their own eyes. The *argument* is, that they had so clear a representation of the Lord Jesus, and of the design of his death, that it was strange that they had so soon been perverted from the belief of it. Had they *seen* the Saviour crucified; had they stood by the cross and witnessed his agony in death on account of sin, how could they doubt what was the design of his dying, and how could they be seduced from faith in his death, or be led to embrace any other method of justification? How could they *now* do it, when, although they had not *seen* him die, they had the fullest knowledge of the object for which he gave his precious life? The *doctrine* taught in this verse is, that a faithful exhibition of the sufferings and death of the Saviour *ought* to exert an influence over our minds and hearts *as if* we had seen him die; and that they to whom such an exhibition has been made should avoid being led astray by the blandishments of false doctrines, and by the arts of man. Had we *seen* the Saviour expire, we could never have forgotten the scene. Let us endeavour to cherish a remembrance of his sufferings and death *as if* we had seen him die.

2. *This only would I learn of you.* I would ask this of you; retaining still the language of severe reproof. The

design here, and in the following verses, is, to *prove* to them that the views which they had at first embraced were correct, and that the views which they *now* cherished were false. To show them this, he asks them the simple question, by what means they had obtained the exalted privileges which they enjoyed? Whether they had obtained them by the simple gospel, or whether by the observance of the law? The word "only" here (*μόνον*) implies that this was enough to settle the question. The argument to which he was about to appeal was *enough* for his purpose. He did not need to go any further. They had been converted. They had received the Holy Spirit. They had had abundant evidence of their acceptance with God, and the simple matter of inquiry now was, whether this had occurred as the regular effect of the gospel, or whether it had been by obeying the law of Moses? ¶ *Received ye the Spirit.* The Holy Spirit. He refers here, doubtless, to *all* the manifestations of the Spirit which had been made to them, in renewing the heart, in sanctifying the soul, in comforting them in affliction, and in his miraculous agency among them. The Holy Spirit had been conferred on them at their conversion (comp. Acts x. 44; xi. 17) and this was to them proof of the favour of God, and of their being accepted by him. ¶ *By the works of the law.* By obeying the law of Moses or of *any* law. It was in no way connected with their obeying the law. This must have been so clear to them that no one could have any doubt on the subject. The inestimably rich and precious gift of the Holy Spirit had not been conferred on them in consequence of their obeying the law. ¶ *Or by the hearing of faith.* In connection with hearing the gospel requiring faith as a condition of salvation. The Holy Spirit was sent down only in connection with the preaching of the gospel. It was a matter of truth, and which could not be denied,

## 3 Are ye so foolish? having

a chap. 4.9.

b IIe.9.10.

that those influences had not been imparted under the law, but had been connected with the gospel of the Redeemer; comp. Acts ii. The doctrine taught in this verse is, that the benefits resulting to Christians from the gift of the Holy Spirit are enough to prove that the gospel is from God, and therefore true. This was the case with regard to the miraculous endowments communicated in the early ages of the church by the Holy Spirit; for the miracles which were wrought, the knowledge of languages imparted, and the conversion of thousands from the error of their ways, proved that the system was from heaven; and it is true now. Every Christian has had ample proof, from the influences of the Spirit on his heart and around him, that the system which is attended with such benefits is from heaven. His own renewed heart; his elevated and sanctified affections; his exalted hopes; his consolations in trial; his peace in the prospect of death, and the happy influences of the system around him in the conversion of others, and in the intelligence, order, and purity of the community, are ample proof that the religion is true. Such effects do not come from any attempt to keep the law; they result from no other system. No system of infidelity produces them; no mere system of infidelity can produce them. It is only by that pure system which proclaims salvation by the grace of God; which announces salvation by the merits of the Lord Jesus, that such effects are produced. The Saviour promised the Holy Spirit to descend after his ascension to heaven to apply his work; and everywhere, under the faithful preaching of the simple gospel, that Spirit keeps up the evidence of the truth of the system by his influences on the hearts and lives of men.

3. *Are ye so foolish?* Can it be that you are so unwise? The idea is, that Paul hardly thought it credible that they *could* have pursued such a course. They had so cordially em-

a begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect<sup>b</sup> by the flesh?

braced the gospel when he preached to them, they had given such evidences that they were under its influence, that he regarded it as hardly possible that they should have so far abandoned it as to embrace such a system as they had done. ¶ *Having begun in the Spirit.* That is, when the gospel was first preached to them. They had commenced their professedly Christian life under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and with the pure and spiritual worship of God. They had known the power and spirituality of the glorious gospel. They had been renewed by the Spirit; sanctified in some measure by him; and had submitted themselves to the spiritual influences of the gospel. ¶ *Are ye now made perfect.* Tindal renders this, "ye would now end." The word here used (*τελειώω*) means properly, to bring through to an end, to finish; and the sense here has probably been expressed by Tindal. The idea of *perfecting*, in the sense in which we now use that word, is not implied in the original. It is that of finishing, ending, completing; and the sense is: "You began your Christian career under the elevated and spiritual influences of Christianity, a system so pure and so exalted above the carnal ordinances of the Jews. Having begun thus, can it be that you are *finishing* your Christian course, or carrying it on to completion by the observance of those ordinances, as if they were more pure and elevating than Christianity? Can it be that you regard them as *an advance* on the system of the gospel?" ¶ *By the flesh.* By the observance of the carnal rites of the Jews, for so the word here evidently means. This has not ever been an uncommon thing. Many have been professedly converted by the Spirit, and have soon fallen into the observance of mere rites and ceremonies, and depended mainly on them for salvation. Many churches have commenced their career in an elevated and spiritual manner, and have ended in the observance of mere forms. So



4 Have ye suffered so <sup>1</sup> many things in vain? <sup>a</sup> if it be yet in vain.

5 He therefore that ministereth

1 or, great.

a 2 John 8.

many Christians begin their course in a spiritual manner, and end it "in the flesh" in another sense. They soon conform to the world. They are brought under the influence of worldly appetites and propensities. They forget the spiritual nature of their religion; and they live for the indulgence of ease, and for the gratification of the senses. They build them houses, and they "plant vineyards," and they collect around them the instruments of music, and the bowl and the wine is in their feasts, and they surrender themselves to the luxury of living: and it seems as if they intended to *perfect* their Christianity by drawing around them as much of the world as possible. The beautiful simplicity of their early piety is gone. The blessedness of those moments when they lived by simple faith has fled. The times when they sought all their consolation in God are no more; and they now seem to differ from the world only in form. I dread to see a Christian inherit much wealth, or even to be thrown into very prosperous business. I see in it a temptation to build himself a splendid mansion, and to collect around him all that constitutes luxury among the people of the world. How natural for him to feel that if he has wealth like others, he should show it in a similar manner! And how easy for the most humble and spiritually-minded Christian, in the beginning of his Christian life, to become conformed to the world (such is the weakness of human nature in its best forms); and having begun in the spirit, to end in the flesh!

4. *Have ye suffered so many things in vain?* Paul reminds them of what they had endured on account of their attachment to Christianity. He assures them, that if the opinions on account of which they had suffered were false, then their sufferings had been in vain. They were of no use to them—for what advantage was it to

to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

b 2 Cor. 3.8.

suffer for a false opinion? The opinions for which they had suffered had not been those which they now embraced. They were not those connected with the observance of the Jewish rites. They had suffered on account of their having embraced the *gospel*, the system of justification by a crucified Redeemer; and now, if those sentiments were wrong, why, their sufferings had been wholly in vain; see this argument pursued at much greater length in 1 Cor. xv. 18, 19, 29—32. *If it be yet in vain.* That is, I trust it is not in vain. I hope you have not so far abandoned the gospel, that all your sufferings in its behalf have been of no avail. I believe the system is true; and if true, and you are sincere Christians, it will not be in vain that you have suffered in its behalf, though you have gone astray. I trust, that although your principles have been shaken, yet they have not been wholly overthrown, and that you will not reap the reward of your having suffered so much on account of the gospel.

5. *He therefore that ministereth, &c.* This verse contains substantially a repetition of the argument in ver. 2. The argument is, that the gift of the Holy Spirit to them was not imparted in consequence of the observance of the law of Moses, but in connection with the preaching of the gospel. By the word "he" in this place, Clarke, Doddridge, Bloomfield, Chandler, Locke and many others, suppose that the apostle means himself. Bloomfield says, that it is the common opinion of "all the ancient commentators." But this seems to me a strange opinion. The obvious reference, it seems to me, is to God, who had furnished or imparted to them the remarkable influences of the Holy Spirit, and this had been done in connection with the preaching of the gospel, and not by the observance of the law. If, however, it refers to Paul, it means that

6 Even as Abraham <sup>a</sup> believed God, and it was <sup>1</sup> accounted to him for righteousness.

7 Know ye therefore, that they

<sup>a</sup> Ge. 15. 6.

<sup>1</sup> or, imputed.

he had been made the agent or instrument in imparting to them those remarkable endowments, and that this had been done by one who had not enforced the necessity of obeying the law of Moses, but who had preached to them the simple gospel.

6. *Even as Abraham believed God, &c.*; see this passage fully explained in the Notes on Rom. iv. 3. The passage is introduced here by the apostle to show that the most eminent of the patriarchs was not saved by the deeds of the law. He was saved by faith, and this fact showed that it was possible to be saved in that way, and that it was the design of God to save men in this manner. Abraham believed God, and was justified, *before* the law of Moses was given. It could not, therefore, be pretended that the law was *necessary* to justification; for if it had been, Abraham could not have been saved. But if not necessary in his case, it was in no other; and this instance demonstrated that the false teachers among the Galatians were wrong even according to the Old Testament.

7. *Know ye therefore, &c.* Learn from this case. It is an inference which follows, that all they who believe are the children of Abraham. ¶ *They which are of faith.* Who believe, and who are justified in this manner. ¶ *Are the children of Abraham.* Abraham was the "father of the faithful." The most remarkable trait in his character was his unwavering confidence in God. They who evinced the same trait, therefore, were worthy to be called his children. They would be justified in the same way, and in the same manner meet the approbation of God. It is *implied* here, that it was sufficient for salvation to have a character which would render it proper to say that we are the children of Abraham. If we are like him, if we evince the same spirit and character, we may be sure of salvation.

which are of faith, the same are the children <sup>b</sup> of Abraham.

8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify <sup>c</sup> the

<sup>b</sup> John 8. 39; Ro. 4. 11—16.

<sup>c</sup> ver. 22.

8. *And the Scripture.* The word Scripture refers to the Old Testament; see Note, John v. 39. It is here personified, or spoken of as *foreseeing*. The idea is, that he by whom the scriptures were inspired, foresaw that. It is agreeable, the meaning is, to the account on the subject in the Old Testament. The Syriac renders this, "Since God foreknew that the Gentiles would be justified by faith, he before announced to Abraham, as the scripture saith, In thee shall all nations be blessed." ¶ *Foreseeing.* That is, this doctrine is contained in the Old Testament. It was foreseen and predicted that the heathen would be justified by faith, and not by the works of the law. ¶ *That God would justify the heathen.* Gr. The nations—*τὰ ἔθνη*—the Gentiles. The fact that the heathen, or the Gentiles would be admitted to the privileges of the true religion, and be interested in the benefits of the coming of the Messiah, is a fact which is everywhere abundantly predicted in the Old Testament. As an instance, see Isa. xlix. 6, 22, 23; lx. I do not know that it is anywhere distinctly foretold that the heathen would be justified by *faith*, nor does the argument of the apostle require us to believe this. He says that the scriptures, *i. e.* he who inspired the scriptures, *foresaw* that fact, and that the scriptures were written *as if* with the knowledge of that fact; but it is not directly affirmed. The whole structure and frame of the Old Testament, however, proceeds on the supposition that it would be so; and this is all that the declaration of the apostle requires us to understand. ¶ *Preached before the gospel.* This translation does not convey quite the idea to us, which the language of Paul, in the original, would to the people to whom he addressed it. We have affixed a *technical sense* to the phrase "to preach the gospel." It is applied to the formal

heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*,<sup>a</sup> In thee shall all nations be blessed.

<sup>a</sup> Ge.12.3; 22.18; Ac.3.25.

and public annunciation of the truths of religion, especially the "good news" of a Saviour's birth, and of redemption by his blood. But we are not required by the language used here to suppose that this was done to Abraham, or that "the gospel" was preached to him in the sense in which we all now use that phrase. The expression, in Greek (*προεκηρύχθη*), means merely, "the joyful news was announced beforehand to Abraham;" *scil.* that in him should all the nations of the earth be blessed. It was *implied*, indeed, that it would be by the Messiah; but the distinct point of the "good news" was not the "gospel" as we understand it, but it was that somehow through him all the nations of the earth would be made happy. Tindal has well translated it, "Showed beforehand glad tidings unto Abraham." This translation should have been adopted in our common version. ¶ *In thee shall all nations be blessed*; see Notes on Acts iii. 25; Rom. iv. 13. All nations should be made happy in him, or through him. The sense is, that the Messiah was to be descended from him, and the religion of the Messiah, producing peace and salvation, was to be extended to all the nations of the earth; see Gen. xii. 3; comp. Note on ver. 16 of this chapter.

[*Εὐαγγέλιον* doubtless here, as elsewhere, signifies to announce glad tidings. And in all the passages where this word occurs, even in those where the author might be disposed to allow that the "gospel technically" was meant, the translation which he proposes here would be very suitable and exact. It was certainly the same gospel that was preached to Abraham, that is now preached to us, though not with the same fulness of revelation, in his case. The apostle here affirms that the gospel, *i. e.*, the way of justification through Christ, in opposition to the legal system he had been condemning—was, in few words, preached to Abraham, being contained in that promise, "in thee shall all nations be blessed;" see Gen. xxii. 12. The full meaning of the promise, indeed, could not be gathered from

9 So then <sup>b</sup> they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

10 For as many as are of the

<sup>b</sup> chap.4.28.

the words themselves, but Abraham must have understood their application in a far more extensive sense than that "somehow through him all the nations of the earth would be made happy." Whether the true import were made known to him directly by the Spirit of God, or discerned by him in typical representation, it is certain that Abraham's faith terminated on the promised Seed, *i. e.*, Christ whose day he desired to see, and seeing it afar, was glad, John viii. 56. "Hereof it followeth," says Luther on the place, "that the blessing and faith of Abraham is the same that ours is, that Abraham's Christ is our Christ, that Christ died as well for the sins of Abraham as for us."]

9. *So then they which be of faith.* They whose leading characteristic it is that they *believe*. This was the leading trait in the character of Abraham, and this is the leading thing required of those who embrace the gospel, and in the character of a true Christian. ¶ *Are blessed with faithful Abraham.* In the same manner they are interested in the promises made to him, and they will be treated as he was. They are justified in the same manner, and admitted to the same privileges on earth and in heaven.

10. *For as many as are of the works of the law.* As many as are seeking to be justified by yielding obedience to the law—whether the moral law, or the ceremonial law. The proposition is general; and it is designed to show that, from the nature of the case, it is impossible to be justified by the works of the law, since, under all circumstances of obedience which we can render, we are still left with its heavy curse resting on us. ¶ *Are under the curse.* 'The curse which the law of God denounces. Having failed by all their efforts to yield perfect obedience, they must, of course, be exposed to the curse which the law denounces on the guilty. The word rendered curse (*κατάρα*) means, as with us, properly, *imprecation*, or *cursing*. It is used in the Scriptures particularly in the sense of the Hebrew

works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, <sup>a</sup> Cursed is every one that continueth not in

<sup>a</sup> De. 27. 26.

מָלֵא, malediction, or execration (Job xxxi. 30; Jer. xxix. 18; Dan. ix. 11); of the word מָלֵא (Mal. ii. 2; Rev. iii. 33); and especially of the common Hebrew word בִּלְיָה, a curse; Gen. xxvii. 12, 13; Deut. xi. 26, 28, 29; xxiii. 5; xxvii. 13, *et saepe al.* It is here used evidently in the sense of devoting to punishment or destruction; and the idea is, that all who attempt to secure salvation by the works of the law, must be exposed to its penalty. It denounces a curse on all who do not yield entire obedience; and no partial compliance with its demands can save from the penalty. ¶ *For it is written.* The substance of these words is found in Deut. xxviii. 26: "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." It is the solemn close of a series of maledictions, which Moses denounces in that chapter on the violators of the law. In this quotation, Paul has given the sense of the passage, but he has quoted literally neither from the Hebrew nor from the Septuagint. The *sense*, however, is retained. The word "cursed" here means, that the violator of the law shall be devoted to punishment or destruction. The phrase "that continueth not," in the Hebrew is "that confirmeth not"—that does not establish or confirm by his life. He would *confirm* it by *continuing* to obey it; and thus the sense in Paul and in Moses is substantially the same. The word "all" is not expressed in the Hebrew in Deuteronomy, but it is evidently implied, and has been inserted by the English translators. It is found, however, in six MSS. of Kennicott and De Rossi; in the Samaritan text; in the Septuagint; and in several of the Targums.—*Clarke.* ¶ *The book of the law.* That is, in the law. This phrase is not found in the passage in Deuteronomy. The expression there is, "the words of this law." Paul gives it a somewhat larger sense, and applies it to the whole of the law of God. The mean-

ing is, that the *whole* law must be obeyed, or man cannot be justified by it, or will be exposed to its penalty and its curse. This idea is expressed more fully by James (ii. 10); "Who-soever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all;" that is, he is guilty of breaking the law as a *whole*, and must be held responsible for such violation. The sentiment here is one that is common to *all* law, and must be, from the nature of the case. The idea is, that a man who does not yield compliance to a whole law, is subject to its penalty, or to a curse. All law is sustained on this principle. A man who has been honest, and temperate, and industrious, and patriotic, if he commits a single act of murder, is subject to the curse of the law, and must meet the penalty. A man who has been honest and honourable in all his dealings, yet if he commit a single act of forgery, he must meet the curse denounced by the laws of his country, and bear the penalty. So, in all matters pertaining to law: no matter what the integrity of the man; no matter how upright he has been, yet, for the *one offence* the law denounces a penalty, and he must bear it. It is out of the question for him to be justified by it. He cannot plead as a reason why he should not be condemned for the act of murder or forgery, that he has in all other respects obeyed the law, or even that he has been guilty of no such offences before. Such is the idea of Paul in the passage before us. It was clear to his view that man had not in all respects yielded obedience to the law of God. If he had not done this, it was impossible that he should be justified by the law, and he must bear its penalty.

11 But that no man is justified

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11. *But that no man is justified, &c.* The argument which Paul has been pursuing he proceeds to confirm by an express declaration of the Bible. The argument is this: "It is impos-

by the law in the sight of God, *it* is evident: for, The *a* just shall live by faith.

12 And the law *b* is not of faith:

*a* Hab.2.4.

*b* Rom.10.5,6.

sible that a man should be justified by the law, because God has appointed another way of justification." But there cannot be two ways of obtaining life, and as he has appointed *faith* as the condition on which men shall *live*, he has precluded from them the possibility of obtaining salvation in any other mode. ¶ *For, The just shall live by faith.* This is quoted from Hab. ii. 4. This passage is also quoted by Paul in Rom. i. 17; see it explained in the Note on that verse. The sense here is, that life is promised to man only in connection with faith. It is not by the works of the law that it is done. The condition of life is faith: and he lives who believes. The meaning is not, I apprehend, that the man who is justified by faith shall live, but that life is promised and exists only in connection with faith, and that the just or righteous man obtains it only in this way. Of course it cannot be obtained by the observance of the law, but must be by some other scheme.

12. *And the law is not of faith.* The law is not a matter of faith; it does not relate to faith; it does not require faith; it deals in other matters, and it pertains to another system than to faith. ¶ *But, The man, &c.* This is the language of the law, and this is what the law teaches. It does not make provision for faith, but it requires unwavering and perpetual obedience, if man would obtain life by it; see this passage explained in the Notes on Rom. x. 5.

13. *Christ hath redeemed us.* The word used here (ἡγοράσας) is not that which is usually employed in the New Testament to denote redemption. That word is λυτρώω. The difference between them mainly is, that the word used here more usually relates to a *purchase* of any kind; the other is used strictly with reference to a *ransom*. The word here used is more *general* in its meaning; the other is

but, The *c* man that doeth them shall live in them.

13 Christ *d* hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being

*c* Le.18.5; Eze.20.11. *d* 2 Co.5.21; chap.4.5.

strictly appropriated to a ransom. This distinction is not observable here, however, and the word here used is employed in the proper sense of redeem. It occurs in the New Testament only in this place, and in chap. iv. 5; Eph. v. 16; Col. iv. 5. It properly means, to purchase, to buy up; and then to purchase any one, to redeem, to set free. Here it means, that Christ had purchased, or set us free from the curse of the law, by his being made a curse for us. On the meaning of the words *redeem* and *ransom*, see my Notes on Rom. iii. 25; Isa. xliii. 3; comp. 2 Cor. v. 21. ¶ *From the curse of the law.* The curse which the law threatens, and which the execution of the law would inflict; the punishment due to sin. This must mean, that he has rescued us from the consequences of transgression in the world of woe; he has saved us from the punishment which our sins have deserved. The word, "us" here, must refer to *all* who are redeemed; that is, to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The curse of the law is a curse which is due to sin, and cannot be regarded as applied particularly to any one class of men. All who violate the law of God, however that law may be made known, are exposed to its penalty. The word "law" here, relates to the law of God in general, to all the laws of God made known to man. The law of God denounced death as the wages of sin. It threatened punishment in the future world for ever. That would certainly have been inflicted, but for the coming and death of Christ. The world is lying by nature under this curse, and it is sweeping the race on to ruin. ¶ *Being made a curse for us.* This is an exceedingly important expression. Tindal renders it, "And was made a curse for us." The Greek word is κατάρα, the same word which is used in ver. 10; see Note on that verse. There is scarcely any

made a curse for us : for it is writ-

a De.21.23.

passage in the New Testament on which it is more important to have correct views than this ; and scarcely any one on which more erroneous opinions have been entertained. In regard to it, we may observe that it does not mean, (1.) That by being made a *curse*, his character or work were in any sense displeasing to God. He approved always of what the Lord Jesus did, and he regarded his whole character with love and approbation. The passage should never be so interpreted as to leave the impression that he was in any conceivable sense the object of the divine displeasure. (2.) He was not *ill-deserving*. He was not blame-worthy. He had done no wrong. He was holy, harmless, undefiled. No crime charged upon him was proved ; and there is no clearer doctrine in the Bible than that in all his character and work the Lord Jesus was perfectly holy and pure. (3.) He was not *guilty* in any proper sense of the word. The word guilty means, properly, to be bound to punishment for crime. It does not mean properly, to be exposed to suffering, but it always, when properly used, implies the notion of personal crime. I know that theologians have used the word in a somewhat different sense, but it is contrary to the common and just apprehensions of men. When we say that a man is *guilty*, we instinctively think of his having committed a crime, or having done something wrong. When a jury finds a man *guilty*, it implies that the man has committed a crime, and *ought* to be punished. But in this sense, and in no conceivable sense, where the word is properly used, was the Lord Jesus guilty. (4.) It cannot be meant that the Lord Jesus properly bore the penalty of the law. His sufferings were in the *place* of the penalty, not the *penalty itself*. They were a *substitution* for the penalty, and were, therefore, strictly and properly vicarious, and were not the identical sufferings which the sinner would himself have endured. There are some things

ten, a Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree :

in the penalty of the law, which the Lord Jesus did not endure, and which a substitute or a vicarious victim could not endure. Remorse of conscience is a part of the inflicted penalty of the law, and will be a vital part of the sufferings of the sinner in hell—but the Lord Jesus did not endure that. *Eternity of sufferings* is an essential part of the penalty of the law—but the Lord Jesus did not suffer for ever. Thus there are numerous sorrows connected with the consciousness of personal guilt, which the Lord Jesus did not and cannot endure. (5.) He was not sinful, or a sinner, in any sense. He did not *so* take human guilt upon him, that the words *sinful* and *sinner* could with any propriety be applied to him. They are *not* applied to him any way in the Bible ; but the language there is undeviating. It is, that in all senses he was holy and undefiled. And yet language is often used on this subject which is horrible and but little short of blasphemy, as if he was guilty, and as if he was even the greatest sinner in the universe. I have heard language used which sent a thrill of horror to my heart ; and language may be found in the writings of those who hold the doctrine of imputation in the strictest sense, which is but little short of blasphemy. I have hesitated whether I should copy expressions here on this subject from one of the greatest and best of men,—I mean LUTHER,—to show the nature of the views which men sometimes entertain on the subject of the imputation of sin to Christ. But as Luther deliberately published them to the world in his favourite book, which he used to call his “Catharine de Bora,” after the name of his wife ; and as similar views are sometimes entertained now ; and as it is important that such views should be held up to universal abhorrence,—no matter how respectable the source from which they emanate,—I will copy a few of his expressions on this subject. “And this, no doubt, all the prophets did foresee in spirit, that

*Christ should become the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, and blasphemer, THAT EVER WAS OR COULD BE IN THE WORLD.* For he being made a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, is not now an innocent person and without sins; is not now the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary; but a sinner which hath and carrieth the sin of Paul, who was a blasphemer, an oppressor, and a persecutor; of Peter, which denied Christ; of David, which was an adulterer, a murderer, and caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord; and, briefly, which hath and beareth all the sins of all men in his body: not that he himself committed them, but for that he received them, being committed or done of us, and laid them upon his own body, that he might make satisfaction for them with his own blood. Therefore, this general sentence of Moses comprehendeth him also (albeit in his own person he was innocent), because it found him amongst sinners and transgressors; like as the magistrate taketh him for a thief, and punisheth him whom he findeth among other thieves and transgressors, though he never committed any thing worthy of death. When the law, therefore, found him among thieves it condemned and killed him as a thief." "If thou wilt deny him to be a sinner and accused, deny, also, that he was crucified and dead." "But if it be not absurd to confess and believe that Christ was crucified between two thieves, then it is not absurd to say that he was accused, and OF ALL SINNERS, THE GREATEST."\* "God, our most merciful Father, sent his only Son into the world, and laid upon him all the sins of all men, saying, be thou Peter, that denier; Paul, that persecutor, blasphemer, and cruel oppressor; David, that adulterer; that sinner which did eat the apple in paradise; that thief which hanged upon the cross; and, briefly, be thou the person which hath committed the sins of all men; see, therefore, that thou pay and satisfy for them."—*Luther on the Galatians*, chap. iii. 13. [pp. 213—215. Ed. Lond. 1838.] Luther was

\* The underscoring is mine.

a great and holy man. He held, as firmly as any one can, to the personal holiness of the Redeemer. But this language shows how imperfect and erroneous views may warp the language of holy men; and how those sentiments led him to use language which is little less than blasphemy. Indeed, we cannot doubt that if Luther had heard this very language used by one of the numerous enemies of the gospel in his time, as applicable to the Saviour, he would have poured out the full torrent of his burning wrath, and all the stern denunciations of his most impassioned eloquence, on the head of the scoffer and the blasphemer. It is singular, it is one of the remarkable facts in the history of mind, that a man with the New Testament before him, and accustomed to contemplate daily its language, could ever have allowed himself to use expressions like these of the holy and unspotted Saviour. But what is the meaning of the language of Paul, it will be asked, when he says that he was "made a curse for us?" In reply, I answer, that the meaning must be ascertained from the passage which Paul quotes in support of his assertion, that Christ was "made a curse for us." That passage is, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." This passage is found in Deut. xxi. 23. It occurs in a law respecting one who was hanged for a "sin worthy of death," ver. 22. The law was, that he should be buried the same day, and that the body should not remain suspended over the night, and it is added, as a reason for this, that "he that is hanged is accursed of God;" or, as it is in the margin, "the curse of God." The meaning is, that when one was executed for crime in this manner, he was the object of the Divine displeasure and malediction. Regarded thus as an object accursed of God, there was a propriety that the man who was executed for crime should be *buried* as soon as possible, that the offensive object should be hidden from the view. In quoting this passage, Paul leaves out the words "of God," and simply says, that the one who was hanged or a tree was held accursed. The sense

of the passage before us is, therefore, that Jesus was subjected to what was regarded as an accursed death. *He was treated in his death as if he had been a criminal.* He was put to death in the same manner as he would have been if he had himself been guilty of the violation of the law. Had he been a thief or a murderer; had he committed the grossest and the blackest crimes, this would have been the punishment to which he would have been subjected. This was the mode of punishment adapted to those crimes, and he was treated *as if* all these had been committed by him. Or, in other words, had he been guilty of all these, or any of these, he could not have been treated in a more shameful and ignominious manner than he was; nor could he have been subjected to a more cruel death. As has already been intimated, it does not mean that he was guilty, nor that he was not the object of the approbation and love of God, but that his death was the same that it would have been if he had been the vilest of malefactors, and that that death was regarded by the law as accursed. It was by such substituted sorrows that we are saved; and he consented to die the most shameful and painful death, *as if* he were the vilest malefactor, in order that the most guilty and vile of the human race might be saved. In regard to the way in which his death is connected with our justification, see Note on chap. ii. 16. It may be observed, also, that the punishment of the cross was unknown to the Hebrews in the time of Moses, and that the passage in Deut. xxi. 23, did not refer originally to that. Nor is it known that hanging criminals alive was practised among the Hebrews. Those who were guilty of great crimes were first stoned or otherwise put to death, and then their bodies were suspended for a few hours on a gibbet. In many cases, however, merely the *head* was suspended after it had been severed from the body, Gen. xl. 17—19; Num. xxv. 4, 5. Crucifixion was not known in the time of the giving of the law; but the Jews gave such an extent to the law in Deut. xxi. 23, as to include

this mode of punishment; see John xix. 1, seq. The force of the argument here, as used by the apostle Paul, is, that if to be suspended on a gibbet after having been put to death, was regarded as a curse, it should not be regarded as a curse in a less degree to be suspended alive on a cross, and to be put to death in this manner. If this interpretation of the passage be correct, then it follows that this should never be used as implying, *in any sense*, that Christ was guilty, or that he was ill-deserving, or that he was an object of the divine displeasure, or that he poured out on him all his wrath. He was, throughout, an object of the divine love and approbation. God never loved him more, or approved what he did more, than when he gave himself to death on the cross. He had no hatred towards him; he had no displeasure to express towards him. And it is this which makes the atonement so wonderful and so glorious. Had he been displeased with him; had the Redeemer been properly an object of his wrath; had he in any sense *deserved* those sorrows, there would have been no merit in his sufferings; there would have been no atonement. What merit can there be when one suffers only what he deserves? But what made the atonement so wonderful, so glorious, so benevolent; what made it *an atonement at all*, was, that innocence was treated *as if* it were guilt; that the most pure, and holy, and benevolent, and lovely being on earth should *consent* to be treated, and should be treated by God and man, *as if* he were the most vile and ill-deserving. This is the mystery of the atonement; this shows the wonders of the divine benevolence; this is the nature of substituted sorrow; and this lays the foundation for the offer of pardon, and for the hope of eternal salvation.

[The curse of the law is doubtless the sentence of condemnation it has pronounced against sinners. Christ being made a curse for us signifies, therefore, his appointment of God to endure the penalty denounced by the law, in our room. *He* intercepted the curse that must have fallen on us, and ruined us for ever. This quotation, and the original pas-



sage in Deuteronomy, certainly do intimate something like *wrath* or *displeasure* in the divine mind. Our author's criticism, here, seems to have but a slender foundation. He affirms, that though Moses in Deut. xxi. 23, speaks of the criminal that hung on a tree being "accursed of God," Paul leaves out "of God," thereby intimating "that Jesus was subjected to what was regarded (by man) as an accursed death." This criticism is employed to get rid of the idea that the Holy Jesus was the object of the divine malediction, and gives opportunity for affirming, what is indeed true, that never was Jesus regarded with greater complacency by his Father, than when he hung on the cross and died in the room of sinners. Yet some meaning must be attached to those scriptures which allege, or seem to allege, that the wrath of God was the bitterest ingredient in the Saviour's cup: see his complaints in the xxii. xl. lxix. and lxxx. Psalms. Nor can the agony in the garden, and the exclamation on the cross, be otherwise accounted for. Speaking of this last, an author of whom America has some reason to boast, says, "In the language of the psalmist, God hid his face from him, that is, if I mistake not, withdrew from him wholly, those manifestations of supreme complacency in his character and conduct, which he had always before made. As this was in itself a most distressing testimony of the divine anger against sin, so it is naturally imagined, and I think, when we are informed that it pleased Jehovah to bruise him, directly declared in the scriptures, that this manifestation was accompanied by other disclosures of the anger of God against sin, and against him as the substitute of sinners."—*Dwight's sermon on the Priesthood of Christ*. It is not with very much reason or modesty, therefore, that the commentator objects to the passage being understood as in *any sense* implying that God "poured out on Christ all his wrath;" such certainly was the fact. And the simple omission by Paul here of the words "of God" is too slender ground for the assertion, that that awful truth is not only not affirmed by him, but tacitly denied.

But this extraordinary criticism is by no means new. Luther thus speaks of it as an objection in his day, "that Paul omitted this word (of God) which is in Moses"—therefore they ask this question, how this sentence may be applied to Christ, that he is accursed of God, and hanged on a tree, seeing that he is no malefactor or thief, but righteous and holy? "This," says the reformer—and the language may be held as his reply to much that is said of him above—"this may peradventure move the simple and the ignorant, thinking that the Sophisters do speak it not only wittily, but also very godly, and thereby do defend the honour and glory of Christ, and give warning to all Christians to beware that they think not

so wickedly of Christ, that he should be made a curse."—*Luther's comment in loco*.

The passage certainly does intimate, if there be any meaning in language, that Christ, as the substitute of sinners, was accursed of God. "We cannot but consider his choosing to hang upon a tree, a situation declared by the ceremonial law to be accursed of God, as intended to demonstrate to the world, that although he himself continued in all things written in the law to do them, his death was not merely the infliction of human law upon an innocent man, but a suffering which in the sight of God was penal."—*Hill*, vol. ii. p. 117, 3d edit. Indeed all the objections and difficulties which Mr. Barnes has stated on this verse, would disappear, if the distinction in the above quotation, and carefully marked also by Luther, were duly attended to, viz., that, between Christ, viewed in his own person, and viewed as the substitute of sinners. By overlooking this distinction in such passages as that before us, we not only stumble at the doctrine of imputation, but play into the hands of the Socinians, and well nigh yield the fortress to them; it being just about as difficult to suppose that an innocent being can suffer for sin, as that sin should be imputed to him. "Many expositors," Mr. Scott has well observed, "who contend against the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers, in disputing against Socinians argue for the vicarious sufferings of Christ in our stead. Now what is this but imputation? He, though perfectly holy, paid the debt which we sinners had contracted. It was exacted and he became answerable; we sinners, on believing, are made the righteousness of God in him, and receive the inheritance which he merited. This then is a reciprocal imputation."—*Comment in loco*. The objections which our author has again in this place urged against the doctrine of imputation, have already been considered, in previous supplementary Notes; see on 2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. iv. v. throughout. It is never supposed, for a moment, by the advocates of that doctrine, that Christ was personally guilty, or that he was guilty in any other sense than having sin charged on him, and being in consequence thereof under obligation to suffer the penalty.

A word now on Luther's language, which sends such a thrill of horror to the commentator's heart, although he knew all the while that the reformer was as zealous for the spotless purity of the Redeemer as himself. Luther was the great reviver of a forgotten, though vital, doctrine; a doctrine which he believed to be "*articulus status vel cadentis ecclesie*," viz. the doctrine of justification by faith, through the imputed righteousness of Christ. With this was inseparably connected the imputation of our sin to him. Considering the importance of this doctrine, and the almost

14 That <sup>a</sup> the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we

<sup>a</sup> Ro.4.9,16.

universal neglect into which it had fallen, it is not to be wondered at, that Luther should express himself strongly on the subject, nor do those authors increase their claim on our confidence, who depart very far from the doctrine of the reformation on this subject. Luther's expressions may possibly be too strong, but might the same charge not be brought against the words of that apostle, who has ventured to affirm, not that Christ has been made a sinner but sin itself, in the very abstract, as if no force of language could be too much on such a subject; see 2 Cor. v. 21, supplementary Note, in which the common rendering of "sin-offering," by which this passage is weakened, is shown to be inadmissible. To the same effect, we are entitled to cite this very passage, notwithstanding every attempt to distort it, in which Paul not only says that Christ was accursed, but a curse, *καταρα* for *καταρατος*, as in the other place *ἁμαρτία* for *ἁμαρτωλός*. Moreover, the reader will find, if he choose to consult Luther's commentary, that he takes great care to affirm "that Christ is innocent as concerning his own person," so that mistake is impossible. It is worthy of notice, too, that the reason why he has introduced such names as thief, malefactor, &c., is that such were the parties who were hanged on a tree under the law, and the "Sophisters" had asked how this sentence could be applied to Christ, who was no thief or malefactor? He resolves it by a reference to the doctrine of imputation, and affirms that Christ "sustained the person" or stood in the room of such. Nor does our author do great justice to the reformer in his second and third quotation. Immediately before the sentence beginning "if thou wilt deny," &c., Luther has, "But some man will say it is very absurd and slanderous to call the Son of God accursed sinner;" and to this the sentence quoted is an answer—an answer to the very objection in the commentary, and therefore ought in justice to have been placed in that light, when it affirms no more than that the fact of Christ being crucified and dead, necessarily implied that sin was charged to his account, otherwise, under the administration of a just God, these things never could have happened to him. The same remarks apply to the third quotation, which is but part of one and the same sentence with the second, and the reader has only to consult the commentary of Luther to be satisfied on the point.]

14. That the blessing of Abraham. The blessing which Abraham enjoyed, to wit, that of being justified by faith.

might receive the promise <sup>b</sup> of the Spirit through faith.

15 Brethren, I speak after the

<sup>b</sup> Is.44.3; Eze.36.27; Joel 2.28,29.

¶ *Might come on the Gentiles.* As well as on the Jews. Abraham was blessed in this manner *before* he was circumcised (Rom. iv. 11), and the same blessing might be imparted to others also who were not circumcised; see this argument illustrated in the Notes on Rom. iv. 10—12. ¶ *Through Jesus Christ.* Since he has been made a curse for all, and since he had no exclusive reference to the Jews or to any other class of men, all may come and partake alike of the benefits of his salvation. ¶ *That we might receive the promise of the Spirit.* That all we who are Christian converts. The promise of the Spirit, or the promised Spirit, is here put for all the blessings connected with the Christian religion. It includes evidently the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit; and all his influences in renewing the heart, in sanctifying the soul, and in comforting the people or God. These influences had been obtained in virtue of the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus in the place of sinners, and these influences were the sum of all the blessings promised by the prophets.

15. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men. I draw an illustration from what actually occurs among men. The illustration is, that when a contract or agreement is made by men involving obligations and promises, no one can add to it or take from it. It will remain as it was originally made. So with God. He made a solemn promise to Abraham. That promise pertained to his posterity. The blessing was connected with that promise, and it was of the nature of a compact with Abraham. But if so, then this could not be effected by the law which was four hundred years after, and the law must have been given to secure some different object from that designed by the promise made to Abraham, ver. 19. But the promise made to Abraham was designed to secure the "in-

manner of men ; Though *it be* but a man's<sup>1</sup> covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

1 *testament.*

heritance," or the favour of God ; and if so, then the same thing could not be secured by the observance of the law, since there could not be two ways so unlike each other of obtaining the same thing. God cannot have two ways of justifying and saving men ; and if he revealed a mode to Abraham, and that mode was by faith, then it could not be by the observance of the law which was given so long after. The main design of the argument and the illustration here (ver. 15, seq.) is to show that the promise made to Abraham was by no means made void by the giving of the law. The law had another design, which did not interfere with the promise made to Abraham. That stood on its own merits, irrespective of the demands and the design of the law. It is possible, as Rosenmüller suggests, that Paul may have had his eye on an objection to his view. The objection may have been that there were important acts of legislation which succeeded the promise made to Abraham, and that that promise must have been superseded by the giving of the law. To this he replies that the Mosaic law given at a late period could not take away or nullify a solemn promise made to Abraham, but that it was intended for a different object. ¶ *Though it be but a man's covenant.* A compact or agreement between man and man. Even in such a case no one can add to it or take from it. The *argument* here is, that such a covenant or agreement must be much less important than a promise made by God. But even that could not be annulled. How much less, therefore, could a covenant made by God be treated as if it were vain. The word covenant here (διαθήκη) is in the margin rendered "Testament;" i. e. will. So Tindal renders it. Its proper classical signification is will or testament, though in the Septuagint and in the New Testament it is the word which is used to denote a covenant or compact ; see Note, Acts iii. 25. Here it is

used in the proper sense of the word covenant, or compact ; a mutual agreement between man and man. The idea is, that where such a covenant exists ; where the faith of a man is solemnly pledged in this manner, no change can be made in the agreement. It is ratified, and firm, and final. ¶ *If it be confirmed.* By a seal or otherwise. ¶ *No man disannulleth, &c.* It must stand. No one can change it. No new conditions can be annexed ; nor can there be any drawing back from its terms. It binds the parties to a faithful fulfilment of all the conditions. This is well understood among men ; and the apostle says that the same thing must take place in regard to God.

16. *Now to Abraham and his seed.* To him and his posterity. ¶ *Were the promises made.* The promise here referred to was that which is recorded in Gen. xxii. 17, 18. "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore ; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." ¶ *He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, &c.* He does not use the plural term, as if the promise extended to many persons, but he speaks in the singular number, as if but one was intended ; and that one must be the Messiah. Such is Paul's interpretation ; such is evidently the sentiment which he intends to convey, and the argument which he intends to urge. He designs evidently to be understood as affirming that in the use of the singular number σπέρμα (seed), instead of the plural σπέρματα (seeds), there is a fair ground of argument to demonstrate that the promise related to Christ or the Messiah, and to him primarily if not exclusively. Now no one ever probably read this passage without feeling a difficulty, and without asking himself whether this argument is sound, and is worthy a man of candour, and especially of an inspired man. Some of the difficulties in the

16 Now to Abraham "and his seed were the promises made. He

a Ge.12.3,7; 17.7.

passage are these. (1.) The promise referred to in Genesis seems to have related to the posterity of Abraham at large, without *any* particular reference to an individual. It is to his seed; his descendants; to all his seed or posterity. Such would be the fair and natural interpretation should it be read by hundreds or thousands of persons who had never heard of the interpretation here put upon it by Paul. (2.) The argument of the apostle seems to proceed on the supposition that the word "seed" (*σπίρμα*), *i. e.* posterity, here cannot refer to more than one person. If it had, says he, it would be in the plural number. But the fact is, that the word is often used to denote posterity at large; to refer to descendants without limitation, just as the word posterity is with us; and it is a fact, moreover, that the word is not used in the plural at all to denote a posterity, the singular form being constantly employed for that purpose. Any one who will open Tromm's Concordance to the Septuagint, or Schmid's on the New Testament, will see the most ample confirmation of this remark. Indeed the *plural* form of the word is never used except in this place in Galatians. The difficulty, therefore, is, that the remark here of Paul appears to be a *trick* of argument, or a *quibble* more worthy of a trifling Jewish Rabbi, than of a grave reasoner or an inspired man. I have stated this difficulty freely, just as I suppose it has struck hundreds of minds, because I do not wish to shrink from any real difficulty in examining the Bible, but to see whether it can be fairly met. In meeting it, expositors have resorted to various explanations, most of them, as it seems to me, unsatisfactory, and it is not necessary to detail them. Bishop Burnet, Doddridge, and some others suppose that the apostle means to say that the promises made to Abraham were *not only* appropriated to one class of his descendants, that is, to those by Isaac, but that they cen-

saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed which is Christ.

tred in *one illustrious* person, through whom all the rest are made partakers of the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. This Doddridge admits the apostle says in "*bad Greek*," but still he supposes that this is the true exposition. Noessett and Rosenmüller suppose that by the word *σπίρμα* (*seed*) here, is not meant the Messiah, but Christians in general; the body of believers. But this is evidently in contradiction of the apostle, who expressly affirms that Christ was intended. It is also liable to another objection that is fatal to the opinion. The very point of the argument of the apostle is, that the singular and not the plural form of the word is used, and that therefore an *individual*, and not a *collective body* or a number of individuals, is intended. But according to this interpretation the reference is, in fact, to a numerous body of individuals, to the whole body of Christians. Jerome affirms that the apostle made use of a false argument, which, although it might appear well enough to the stupid Galatians, would not be approved by wise or learned men. — *Chandler*. Borger endeavours to show that this was in accordance with the mode of speaking and writing among the Hebrews, and especially that the Jewish Rabbis were accustomed to draw an argument like this from the *singular number*, and that the Hebrew word (זרע) *seed* is often used by them in this manner; see his remarks as quoted by Bloomfield *in loc.* But the objection to this is, that though this might be common, yet it is not the less a quibble on the word, for certainly the very puerile reasoning of the Jewish Rabbis is no good authority on which to vindicate the authority of an apostle. Locke and Clarke suppose that this refers to Christ as the spiritual head of the mystical body, and to all believers in him. Le Clerc supposes that it is an allegorical kind of argument, that was fitted to convince the Jews only, who were accustomed to this kind of rea-

soning. I do not know but this solution may be satisfactory to many minds, and that it is capable of vindication, since it is not easy to say how far it is proper to make use of methods of argument used by an adversary in order to convince them. The *argumentum ad hominem* is certainly allowable to a certain extent, when designed to show the legitimate tendency of the principles advanced by an opponent. But here there is no evidence that Paul was reasoning with an adversary. He was showing the Galatians, not the Jews, what was the truth, and justice to the character of the apostle requires us to suppose that he would make use of only such arguments as are in accordance with the eternal principles of truth, and such as may be seen to be true in all countries and at all times. The question then is, whether the argument of the apostle here drawn from the use of the singular word *σπέρμα* (*seed*), is one that can be seen to be sound? or is it a mere quibble, as Jerome and Le Clerc suppose? or is it to be left to be *presumed* to have had a force which we cannot now trace? for *this* is possible. Socrates and Plato may have used arguments of a subtle nature, based on some nice distinctions of words which were perfectly sound, but which we, from our necessary ignorance of the delicate shades of meaning in the language, cannot now understand. Perhaps the following remarks may show that there is *real* force and propriety in the position which the apostle takes here. If not, then I confess my inability to explain the passage. (1.) There can be no reasonable objection to the opinion that the promise originally made to Abraham *included* the Messiah, and the promised blessings were to descend through him. This is so often affirmed in the New Testament, that to deny it would be to deny the repeated declarations of the sacred writers, and to make war on the whole structure of the Bible; see particularly Rom. iv.; comp. John viii. 56. If this general principle be admitted, it will remove much perplexity from the controversy. (2.) The pro-

mise made to Abraham (Gen. xxii 18), "and in thy seed (בְּיָרִיךְ, Sept. ἡ σπέρματι σου, where the words both in Heb. and in Gr. are in the singular number) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," cannot refer to *all* the seed or the posterity of Abraham taken collectively. He had two sons, Isaac by Rebecca, and Ishmael by Hagar, besides numerous descendants by Keturah; Gen. xxv. 1, seq. Through a large part of these no particular blessings descended on the human family, and there is no sense in which all the families of the earth are particularly blessed in them. On any supposition, therefore, there must have been *some* limitation of the promise; or the word "seed" was intended to include only *some* portion of his descendants, whether a particular branch or an individual, does not yet appear. It must have referred to a *part* only of the posterity of Abraham, but to what part is to be learned only by subsequent revelations. (3.) It was the *intention* of God to confine the blessing to one branch of the family, to Isaac and his descendants. The *peculiar* promised blessing was to be through him, and not through the family of Ishmael. This intention is often expressed, Gen. xvii. 19—21; xxi. 12; xxv. 11; comp. Rom. ix. 7; Heb. xi. 18. Thus the original promise of a blessing through the posterity of Abraham became somewhat *narrowed down*, so as to show that there was to be a limitation of the promise to a particular portion of his posterity. (4.) If the promise had referred to the two branches of the family; if it had been intended to include Ishmael as well as Isaac, then some term would have been used that would have expressed this. So unlike were Isaac and Ishmael; so different in the circumstances of their birth and their future life; so dissimilar were the prophecies respecting them, that it might be said that their descendants were two races of men; and in scripture the race of Ishmael ceased to be spoken of as the descendants or the posterity of Abraham. There was a sense in which the posterity of Isaac was regarded as the seed or posterity

of Abraham in which the descendants of Ishmael were not; and the term *σπέρμα* or "seed" therefore properly designated the posterity of Isaac. It might be said, then, that the promise "to thy seed" did not refer to the *two* races, as if he had said *σπέρματα*, "seeds," but to *one* (*σπέρμα*), "the seed" of Abraham, by way of eminence. (5.) This promise was subsequently *narrowed down* still more, so as to include only one portion of the descendants of Isaac. Thus it was limited to the posterity of *Jacob*, Esau being excluded; subsequently the peculiar blessing was promised to the family of *Judah*, one of the twelve sons of Jacob (Gen. xlix. 10); in subsequent times it was still further *narrowed down* or limited to the family of *Jesse*; then to that of *David*; then to that of *Solomon*, until it terminated in the Messiah. The original intention of the promise was that there *should be* a limitation, and that limitation was made from age to age, until it terminated in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. By being thus *narrowed down* from age to age, and limited by successive revelations, it was shown that the Messiah was eminently intended,—which is what Paul says here. The promise was indeed at first general, and the term used was of the most general nature; but it was shown from time to time that God *intended* that it should be applied only to one branch or portion of the family of Abraham; and that limitation was finally so made as to terminate in the Messiah. This I take to be the meaning of this very difficult passage of scripture; and though it may not be thought that *all* the perplexities are removed by these remarks, yet I trust they will be seen to be so far removed as that it will appear that there is real force in the argument of the apostle, and that it is not a mere trick of argument, or a quibble unworthy of him as an apostle and a man.

[Whatever may be thought of this solution of the difficulty, the author has certainly given more than due prominence to the objections that are supposed to lie against the apostle's argument. Whatever license a writer in the American Biblical Repository, or such like

work, might take, it certainly is not wise in a commentary intended for Sabbath Schools to affirm, that the great difficulty of the passage is "that the remark here of Paul appears to be a trick of argument, or a quibble more worthy of a trifling Jewish Rabbi than of a grave reasoner and an inspired man," and then to exhibit such a formidable array of objection, and behind it a defence comparatively feeble, accompanied with the acknowledgment that if that be not sufficient the author can do no more! These objections, moreover, are not only stated "fairly" but strongly, and something more than strongly; so that while in the end the authority of the apostle is apparently vindicated, the effect is such, that the reader, unaccustomed to such treatment of inspired men, is tempted to exclaim, "non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis, tempus eget." Indeed we are surprised that, with Bloomfield and Borger before him, the author should ever have made some of the assertions which are set down under this text. As to objection *first*, it does not matter what interpretation hundreds and thousands of persons would naturally put on the passage in Genesis, since the authority of an inspired apostle must be allowed to settle its meaning against them all. The *second* objection affirms, that "the word *σπέρμα* is not used in the plural at all to denote a posterity," on which Bloomfield thus remarks, "it has been denied that the word *σπέρμα* is ever used in the plural, except to denote the seeds of vegetables. And the same assertion has been made respecting *σπέρμα*. But the former position merely extends to the Old Testament, which only contains a fragment and small part of the Hebrew language. So that it cannot be proved that *σπέρμα* was *never* used in the plural to denote *sons, races*. As to the latter assertion it is unfounded; for though *σπέρμα* is used in the singular as a noun of multitude, to denote several children, yet it is sometimes used in the plural to signify several sons of the same family; as in Soph. Œd. Col. 599, γῆς ἐμῆς ἀπηνάθητι Πρὸς τῶν ἱμῶν τοῦ σπέρματός."]

The elaborate Latin Note of Borger, part of which is quoted in Bloomfield, will give complete satisfaction to the student who may wish thoroughly to examine this place. He maintains, 1st. That though the argument of the apostle may not be founded exactly on the use of the singular number, yet the absurdity of his application of the passage in Genesis to the Messiah, would have been obvious if, instead of the singular the plural had been used, "si non *σπέρματος* sed *σπέρματων* mentio fuisset facta;" from which he justly concludes, that at all events "numerus cum hac explicatione non pugnare." 2nd. The word *σπέρμα* is in certain places understood of one man only (de uno homine) and therefore may be so here. 3rd. The apostle, arguing with Jews, employs an argu-

17 And this I say, *That* the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which a

a Ex.12.40,41.

ment to which they were accustomed to attach importance; for they laid great stress on the respective use of the singular and plural number; which argument, indeed, would be liable to the objections stated against it by Mr. Barnes, if the thing to be proven rested entirely on this ground, and had not, besides, its foundation in the actual truth of the case. If the singular number in this place really had that force attached to it which the apostle declares, and if the Jews were influenced in other matters by arguments of this kind, it was certainly both lawful and wise to reason with them after their own fashion. 4th. What is still more to the point, the Jewish writers themselves frequently use the word *אֶחָד*, not only of one man, but especially of the Messiah, "non tantum de uno homine, sed imprimis etiam de Messia exponere solent."

On the whole, the objections against the reasoning on this passage are raised in defiance of apostolical interpretation. But, as has been well observed, "the apostle, to say nothing of his inspiration, might be supposed to be better qualified to decide on a point of this kind, than any modern philologist."—*Bloomfield in loco.*

17. *The covenant which was confirmed before of God.* By God, in his promise to Abraham. It was confirmed before the giving of the law. The confirmation was the solemn promise which God made to him. ¶ *In Christ.* With respect to the Messiah; a covenant relating to him, and which promised that he should descend from Abraham. The word "in," in the phrase "in Christ," does not quite express the meaning of the Greek *ἐν*; *Χριστῷ*. That means rather "unto Christ;" or unto the Messiah; that is, the covenant had respect to him. This is a common signification of the preposition *ἐν*. ¶ *The law.* The law given by God to Moses on mount Sinai. ¶ *Which was four hundred and thirty years after.* In regard to the difficulties which have been felt respecting the chronology referred to here; see the Note on Acts vii. 6. The exact time here referred to was probably when Abraham was called, and when the promise was first made to him. Assuming that as the time referred to, it is not difficult to make

was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

out the period of four hundred and thirty years. That promise was made when Abraham was seventy-five years old; Gen. xii. 3, 4. From that time to the birth of Isaac, when Abraham was a hundred years old, was twenty-five years; Gen. xxi. 5. Isaac was sixty when Jacob was born; Gen. xxv. 26. Jacob went into Egypt when he was one hundred and thirty years old; Gen. xlvii. 9. And the Israelites sojourned there, according to the Septuagint (Ex. xii. 40), two hundred and fifteen years, which completes the number: see Doddridge, Whitby, and Bloomfield. This was doubtless the common computation in the time of Paul; and as his argument did not depend at all on the exactness of the reckoning, he took the estimate which was in common use, without pausing or embarrassing himself by an inquiry whether it was strictly accurate or not. His argument was the same, whether the law was given four hundred and thirty years after the promise, or only two hundred years. The argument is, that a law given after the solemn promise which had been made and confirmed, could not make that promise void. It would still be binding according to the original intention; and the law must have been given for some purpose entirely different from that of the promise. No one can doubt the soundness of this argument. The promise to Abraham was of the nature of a compact. But no law given by one of the parties to a treaty or compact can disannul it. Two nations make a treaty of peace, involving solemn promises, pledges, and obligations. No law made afterwards by one of the nations can disannul or change that treaty. Two men make a contract with solemn pledges and promises. No act of one of the parties can change that, or alter the conditions. So it was with the covenant between God and Abraham. God made to him solemn promises which could not be affected by

18 For if <sup>a</sup> the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise : but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

19 Wherefore then *serveth* the

<sup>a</sup> Rom. 4.14.

<sup>b</sup> Ro. 5.20.

<sup>c</sup> ver. 16.

a future giving of a law. God would feel himself to be under the most solemn obligation to fulfil *all* the promises which he had made to him.

18. *For if the inheritance.* The inheritance promised to Abraham. The sum of the promise was, that "he should be the heir of the world;" see Rom. iv. 13, and the Note on that verse. To that heirship or inheritance Paul refers here, and says that it was an essential part of it that it was to be in virtue of the promise made to him, and not by fulfilling the law. ¶ *Be of the law.* If it be by observing the law of Moses; or if it come in any way by the fulfilling of law. This is plain. Yet the Jews contended that the blessings of justification and salvation were to be in virtue of the observance of the law of Moses. But if so, says Paul, then it could not be by the promise made to Abraham, since there could not be two ways of obtaining the same blessing. ¶ *But God gave it to Abraham by promise.* That, says Paul, is a settled point. It is perfectly clear; and that is to be held as an indisputable fact, that the blessing was given to Abraham by a promise. That promise was confirmed and ratified hundreds of years before the law was given, and the giving of the law could not affect it. But that promise was, that he would be the ancestor of the Messiah, and that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Of course, if they were to be blessed in this way, then it was not to be by the observance of the law, and the law must have been given for a different purpose. What that was, he states in the following verses.

19. *Wherefore then serveth the law?* This is obviously an objection which might be urged to the reasoning which the apostle had pursued. It was very obvious to ask, if the principles which he had laid down were

law? <sup>b</sup> It was added because of transgressions, till the seed <sup>c</sup> should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels <sup>d</sup> in the hand <sup>e</sup> of a Mediator.

<sup>d</sup> Ac. 7.53; Ho. 2.2. <sup>e</sup> Ex. 20.19—22; De. 5.22—31.

correct, of what use was the law? Why was it given at all? Why were there so many wonderful exhibitions of the Divine power at its promulgation? Why were there so many commendations of it in the Scriptures? And why were there so many injunctions to obey it? Are all these to be regarded as nothing; and is the law to be esteemed as worthless? To all this, the apostle replies that the law was not useless, but that it was given by God for great and important purposes, and especially for purposes closely connected with the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham and the work of the Mediator. ¶ *It was added* (προστίθηται). It was appended to all the previous institutions and promises. It was an *additional* arrangement on the part of God for great and important purposes. It was an arrangement *subsequent* to the giving of the promise, and was intended to secure important advantages until the superior arrangement under the Messiah should be introduced, and was with reference to that. ¶ *Because of transgressions.* On account of transgressions, or with reference to them. The meaning is, that the law was given to show the true nature of transgressions, or to show what was sin. It was not to reveal a way of justification, but it was to disclose the true nature of sin; to deter men from committing it; to declare its penalty; to convince men of it, and thus to be "ancillary" to, and preparatory to the work of redemption through the Redeemer. This is the true account of the law of God as given to apostate man, and this use of the law still exists. This effect of the law is accomplished, (1.) By showing us what God requires, and what is duty. It is the straight rule of what is right; and to depart from that is the measure of wrong. (2.) It



shows us the nature and extent of transgression by showing us how far we have departed from it. (3.) It shows what is the just penalty of transgression, and is thus fitted to reveal its true nature. (4.) It is fitted to produce *conviction* for sin, and thus shows how evil and bitter a thing transgression is; see Notes on Rom. iv. 15; vii. 7—11. (5.) It thus shows its own inability to justify and save men, and is a preparatory arrangement to lead men to the cross of the Redeemer; see Note on ver. 24. At the same time, (6.) The law was given with reference to transgressions in order to keep men from transgression. It was designed to restrain and control them by its denunciations, and by the fear of its threatened penalties. When Paul says that the law was given on account of transgressions, we are not to suppose that this was the *sole* use of the law; but that this was a main or leading purpose. It may accomplish many other important purposes (*Calvin*), but this is one leading design. And this design it still accomplishes. It shows men their duty. It reminds them of their guilt. It teaches them how far they have wandered from God. It reveals to them the penalty of disobedience. It shows them that justification by the law is impossible, and that there *must be* some other way by which men must be saved. And since these advantages are derived from it, it is of importance that that law should be still proclaimed, and that its high demands and its penalties should be constantly held up to the view of men. ¶ *Till the seed should come*, &c. The Messiah, to whom the promise particularly applied; see ver. 16. It is not implied here that the law would be of no use *after* that, but that it would accomplish important purposes *before* that. A large portion of the laws of Moses would then indeed cease to be binding. They were given to accomplish important purposes among the Jews until the Messiah should come, and then they would give way to the more important institutions of the gospel. But the moral law would continue to accomplish valuable objects *after* his

advent, in showing men the nature of transgression and leading them to the cross of Christ. The essential idea of Paul here is, that the whole arrangement of the Mosaic economy, including all his laws, was with reference to the Messiah. It was a part of a great and glorious whole. It was not an independent thing. It did not stand by itself. It was incomplete and in many respects unintelligible until he came—as one part of a tally is unmeaning and useless until the other is found. In itself it did not justify or save men, but it served to introduce a system by which they could be saved. It contained no provisions for justifying men, but it was in the design of God an essential part of a system by which they could be saved. It was not a whole in itself, but it was a part of a glorious whole, and led to the completion and fulfilment of the entire scheme by which the race could be justified and brought to heaven. ¶ And it was *ordained by angels*. That is, the law was ordained by angels. The word *ordained* here (*diatagis*) usually means to arrange; to dispose in order; and is commonly used with reference to the marshalling of an army. In regard to the sentiment here that the law was ordained by angels, see the Note on Acts vii. 53. The Old Testament makes no mention of the presence of angels at the giving of the law, but it was a common opinion among the Jews that the law was given by the instrumentality of angels, and arranged by them; and Paul speaks in accordance with this opinion; comp. Heb. ii. 2. The sentiment here is that the law was prescribed, ordered, or arranged by the instrumentality of the angels; an opinion, certainly, which none can prove *not* to be true. In itself considered, there is no more absurdity in the opinion that the law of God should be given by the agency of angels, than there is that it should be done by the instrumentality of man. In the Septuagint (Deut. xxxiii. 2) there is an allusion of the same kind. The Hebrew is, “From his right hand went a fiery law for them.” The LXX. render this, “His angels with him on

his right-hand;" comp. Joseph. Ant. xv. 5, 3. That angels were present at the giving of the law is more than implied, it is believed, in two passages of the Old Testament. The one is that which is referred to above, and a part of which the translators of the Septuagint expressly apply to angels; Deut. xxxiii. 2. The Hebrew is, "Jehovah came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paron, and he came [literally] with ten thousands of holiness;" that is, with his holy ten thousands, or with his holy myriads (לִירוֹבָבֵל). By the holy myriads here mentioned what can be meant but *the angels*? The word "holy" in the Scriptures is not given to storms and winds and tempests; and the natural interpretation is, that he was attended with vast hosts of intelligent beings. The same sentiment is found in Ps. lxxviii. 17: "The chariots of God are myriads, thousands repeated; the Lord is in the midst of them, as in Sinai, as in his sanctuary." Does not this evidently imply that when he gave the law on Mount Sinai he was surrounded by a multitude of angels? see Stuart on the Hebrews, Excursus viii. pp. 565—567. It may be added, that in the fact itself there is no improbability. What is more natural than to suppose that when the law of God was promulgated in such a solemn manner on mount Sinai *to a world*, that the angels should be present? If any occasion on earth has ever occurred where their presence was allowable and proper, assuredly that was one. And yet the Scriptures abound with assurances that the angels are interested in human affairs, and that they have had an important agency in the concerns of man. ¶ *In the hand.* That is, under the direction, or control of. To be in the hand of one is to be under his control; and the idea is, that while this was done by the ordering of the angels or by their disposition, it was under the control of a Mediator. Rosenmüller, however, and others suppose that this means simply *by (per)*; that is, that it was done by the instrumentality of a Mediator. But it seems to me to

imply more than this; that the Mediator here referred to had some jurisdiction or control over the law thus given; or that it was subject to him, or with reference to him. The interpretation however will be affected by the view which is taken of the meaning of the word Mediator. ¶ *Of a Mediator.* The word Mediator (Μεσιτης) means properly one who intervenes between two parties, either as an interpreter or *internuncius*, or as an intercessor or reconciler. In the New Testament, in all the places where it occurs, unless the passage before us be an exception, it is applied to the Lord Jesus, the great Mediator between God and man; 1 Tim. ii. 5; Heb. viii. 6; ix. 15; xii. 24. There has been some difference of opinion as to the reference of the word here. Rosenmüller, Grotius, Doddridge, Bloomfield, Robinson (*Lex.*), Chandler, and many others suppose that it refers to Moses. Calvin and many others suppose that the reference is to Christ. The common sentiment among expositors undoubtedly is, that the reference is to Moses; and it is by no means easy to show that that is not the correct opinion. But to me it seems that there are reasons why it should be regarded as having reference to the great Mediator between God and man. Some of the reasons which incline me to this opinion are, (1.) That the name Mediator is not, so far as I know, applied to Moses elsewhere in the Scriptures. (2.) The name is appropriated to the Lord Jesus. This is certainly the case in the New Testament, unless the passage before us be an exception; and the name is not found in the Old Testament. (3.) It is difficult to see the pertinency of the remark here, or the bearing on the argument, on the supposition that it refers to Moses. How would it affect the drift and purport of the apostle's reasoning? How would it bear on the case? But on the supposition that it refers to the Lord Jesus, that would be a material fact in the argument. It would show that the law was subordinate to the Messiah, and was with reference to him. It was not only subservient by

20 Now a mediator is not a *mediator* of one, but God<sup>a</sup> is one.  
a De.6.4.

being ordained by angels, but as being under the Mediator, and with reference to him until he, the "promised seed," should come. (4.) It is only by such an interpretation that the following "vexed" verse can be understood. If that be applied to Moses, I see not that *any* sense can be affixed to it that shall be pertinent or intelligible. These reasons may not appear satisfactory to others; and I admit they are not as clear as would be desirable that reasons should be in the exposition of the Bible, but they may be allowed perhaps to have *some* weight. If they *are* of weight, then the sentiment of the passage is, that the law was wholly subordinate, and could not make the promise of no effect. For, (1.) It was given hundreds of years after the promise. (2.) It was under the direction of angels, who must themselves be inferior to, and subordinate to the Messiah, the Mediator between God and man. If given by their agency and instrumentality, however important it might be, it could not interfere with a direct promise made by God himself, but must be subordinate to that promise. (3.) It was under the Mediator, the promised Messiah. It was in his hand, and subject to him. It was a part of the great plan which was contemplated in the promise, and was tributary to that, and must be so regarded. It was not an independent scheme; not a thing that stood by itself; but a scheme subordinate and tributary, and wholly under the control of the Mediator, and a part of the plan of redemption, and of course to be modified or abrogated just as that plan should require, and to be regarded as wholly tributary to it. This view will accord certainly with the argument of Paul, and with his design in showing that the law could by no means, and in no way, interfere with the promise made to Abraham, but must be regarded as wholly subordinate to the plan of redemption.

20. *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, &c.* This verse has given

great perplexity to commentators. "There is, unquestionably," says Bloomfield, "no passage in the New Testament that has so much, and to so little purpose, exercised the learning and ingenuity of commentators as the present, which seems to defy all attempts to elicit any satisfactory sense, except by methods so violent as to be almost the same thin, as writing the passage afresh." In regard, however, to the truth of the declarations here—that "a mediator is not a mediator of one," and that "God is one"—there can be no doubt, and no difficulty. The very idea of a mediator supposes that there are two parties or persons between whom the mediator comes either to reconcile them or to bear some message from the one to the other; and it is abundantly affirmed also in the Old Testament that there is but one God; see Deut. vi. 4. But the difficulty is, to see the pertinency or the bearing of the remark on the argument of the apostle. What does he intend to illustrate by the declaration? and how do the truths which he states, illustrate the point before him? It is not consistent with the design of these Notes to detail the numerous opinions which have been entertained of the passage. They may be found in the larger commentaries, and particularly may be seen in Koppe, Excursus vii. on the Galatians. After referring to a number of works on the passage, Rosenmüller adopts the following interpretation, proposed by Noessett, as expressing the true sense. But he (*i. e.* Moses) is not a mediator of one race (to wit, the Abrahamic), but God is the same God of them and of the Gentiles. The sense according to this is, that Moses had not reference in his office as mediator or as *internuncius* to the descendants of Abraham, or to that *one seed* or race, referred to in the promise. He added the hard conditions of the law; required its stern and severe observances; his institutions pertained to the Jews mainly. They indeed might obtain the favour of

God, but by compliance with the severe laws which he had ordained. But to the *one seed*, the whole posterity of Abraham, they concerning whom the promise was made, the Gentiles as well as the Jews, he had no reference in his institutions: all their favours, therefore, must depend on the fulfilment of the *promise* made to Abraham. But God is one and the same in reference to all. His promise pertains to all. He is the common God to the Jews and the Gentiles. There is great difficulty in embracing this view of the passage, but it is not necessary for me to state the difficulty or to attempt to show that the view here proposed cannot be defended. Whitby has expressed substantially the same interpretation of this passage. "But this mediator (namely, Moses) was only the mediator of the Jews, and so was only the mediator of one party, to whom belonged the blessing of Abraham, ver. 8, 14. But God, who made the promise, 'That in one should all the families of the earth be blessed,' is one; the God of the other party, the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and so as ready to justify the one as the other." According to this interpretation, the sense is, that Moses was mediator of *one part* of Abraham's seed, the Israelites; but was not the mediator of the *other part* of that seed, the Gentiles; yet there was the same God to both parties, who was equally ready to justify both. Locke has expressed a view of the passage which differs somewhat from this, but which has quite as much plausibility. According to his exposition it means, that God was but one of the parties to the promise. The Jews and the Gentiles made up the other. But at the giving of the law Moses was a mediator only between God and *the Israelites*, and, therefore, could not transact any thing which would tend to the disannulling of the promise which was between God and *the Jews and Gentiles together*, the other party to the promise. Or in other words, at the covenant made on mount Sinai, there was really present but one of the parties, and consequently nothing could be

done that would affect the other. Moses did not appear in behalf of the Gentiles. They had no representative there. He was engaged only for the Jews, for a *part* only of the one party, and that part could not transact any thing for the whole. The giving of the law, therefore, could not affect the promise which was made to Abraham, and which related to the Jews and the Gentiles as together constituting one party. This view is plausible. It has been adopted by Doddridge, and perhaps may be the true interpretation. No one can deny, however, that it is forced, and that it is far from being obvious. It seems to be *making a meaning* for the apostle, or furnishing him with an argument, rather than *explaining* the one which he has chosen to use; and it may be doubted whether Paul would have used an argument that *required* so much explanation as this before it could be understood. All these expositions proceed on the supposition that the word "mediator" here refers to Moses, and that the transaction here referred to was that on mount Sinai. I would suggest a sense of the passage which I have found in none of the commentaries which I have consulted, and which I would, therefore, propose with diffidence. All that I can claim for it is, that it *may* possibly be the meaning. According to the view which I shall submit, the *words* here are to be regarded as used in their usual signification; and the simplest interpretation possible is to be given to the propositions in the verse. One proposition is, that a mediator is not appointed with reference to one party, but to two. This proposition is universal. Wherever there is a mediator there are *always* two parties. The other proposition is, that God is one; that is, that he is *the same one God*, in whatever form his will may be made known to men, whether by a promise as to Abraham, or by the law as to Moses. The interpretation which I would propose embraces the following particulars (1.) The *design* of the apostle is, to show that the giving of the law could not abrogate or affect the promise made to Abraham; and to

show at the same time what *is* its true object. It could not *annul* the promises, says Paul. It was given long after, and could not affect them, ver. 17. It was an *addition*, an *appendage*, a subsequent enactment for a specific purpose, yet a part of the same general plan, and subordinate to the Mediator, ver. 19. It was to be shown also that the law was not *against* the promises of God. It was a good law (ver. 21); and was not designed to be an *opposing* system, or intended to *counteract* the promise, or the scheme of salvation *by* promise, but was a part of the *same* great plan. (2.) A mediator *always* supposes two parties. In *all* the transactions, therefore, where a mediator is employed, there is supposed to be two parties. When, therefore, the promise was made to Abraham with reference to the Messiah, the great Mediator; and when the law was given in the hand of the Mediator, and under his control, there is *always* supposed to be two parties. (3.) 'The *whole* arrangement here referred to is under the Mediator, and with reference to him. The promise made to Abraham had reference to him and to those who should believe on him; and the law given by Moses was also under him, and with reference to him. He was the grand object and agent of all. He was the Mediator with reference to both. Each transaction had reference to him, though in different ways; the transaction with Abraham relating to him in connection with a promise; the transaction at the giving of the law being under his control *as* Mediator, and being a part of the one great plan. There was an *identity* of plan; and the plan had reference to the Messiah, the great Mediator. (4.) God is one and the same. He is throughout one of the parties; *and he does not change*. However the arrangements may vary, whether in giving the law or imparting a promise, he is the same. There is but one God in all the transaction; and he, throughout, constitutes one of the parties. The other party is man, at first receiving the promise from this one God with reference to the Medi-

ator through Abraham, and then receiving the law through the same Mediator on mount Sinai. He is still the one party unchanged; and there is the same Mediator; implying all along that there are two parties. (5.) It follows, therefore, agreeably to the argument of the apostle, that the law given so long after the promise, could not abrogate it, because they pertained to the same plan, were under the same one God, who was one unchanging party in all this transaction, and had reference to the same Mediator and were alike under his control. It followed, also, that the law was temporary (ver. 19); *interposed* for important purposes until the "seed should come," because it was a part of the same general arrangement, and was under the control of the same Mediator, and directed by the same one God, the unchanging one party in all these transactions. It followed, further, that the one could not be against the other (ver. 21), because they were a part of the same plan, under the control of the same Mediator, and where the same God remained unchanged as the one party. All that is assumed in this interpretation is, (a) That there was but *one* plan or arrangement; or that the transaction with Abraham and with Moses were parts of one great scheme; and, (b) That the Mediator here referred to was not Moses, but the Messiah, the Son of God. The following paraphrase will express the sense which I have endeavoured to convey. "The giving of the law could not annul or abrogate the promise made to Abraham. It was long after that, and it was itself subservient to that. It was given by the instrumentality of angels, and it was entirely under the control of the Mediator, the Messiah. The plan was one; and all the parts of it, in the promise made to Abraham and in the giving of the law, were subordinate to him. A mediator always supposes two parties, and the reference to the Mediator, alike in the promise to Abraham and in the giving of the law, supposes that there *were* two parties. God is one party, the same unchanging God in all the forms

21 *Is the law then against<sup>a</sup> the promises of God? God forbid: for if<sup>b</sup> there had been a law given which could have given life, verily*

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 5. 17.

<sup>b</sup> chap. 2. 21.

of the promise and of the law. In this state of things, it is impossible that the law should clash with the promise, or that it should supersede or modify it. It was a *part* of the one great plan; appointed with reference to the work which the Mediator came to do; and in accordance with the promise made to Abraham; and therefore they could not be contradictory and inconsistent." It is assumed in all this that the Messiah was contemplated in the whole arrangement, and that it was entered into with reference to him. That this *may* be assumed no one can deny who believes the scriptures. The whole arrangement in the Old Testament, it is supposed, was designed to be ancillary to redemption; and the interpretation which has been submitted above is based on that supposition.

21. *Is the law then against the promises of God?* Is the law of Moses to be regarded as opposed to the promises made to Abraham? Does this follow from any view which can be taken of the subject? The object of the apostle in asking this question is, evidently, to take an opportunity to deny in the most positive manner that there can be any such clashing or contradiction. He shows, therefore, what was the design of the law, and declares that the object was to further the plan contemplated in the promise made to Abraham. It was an auxiliary to that. It was as good as a law could be; and it was designed to prepare the way for the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham. ¶ *God forbid.* It cannot be. It is impossible. I do not hold such an opinion. Such a sentiment by no means follows from what has been advanced; comp. Note, Rom. iii. 4. ¶ *For if there had been a law given which could have given life.* The law of Moses is as good as a law can be. It is pure, and holy, and good. It is not the design to insinuate any thing against the law

righteousness should have been by the law.

22 *But the Scripture hath concluded all<sup>c</sup> under sin, that the*

<sup>c</sup> Ro. 4. 11, 12, 16.

in itself, or to say that as a law it is defective. But law *could not* give life. It is not its nature; and man cannot be justified by obedience to it. No man ever has yielded perfect compliance with it, and no man, therefore, can be justified by it; comp. Notes on chap. ii. 16; iii. 10. ¶ *Verily righteousness should have been by the law.* Or justification would have been secured by the law. The law of Moses was as well adapted to this as a law could be. No better law could have been originated for this purpose, and if men were to *attempt* to justify themselves before God by their own works, the law of Moses would be as favourable for such an undertaking as any law which could be revealed. It is as reasonable, and equal, and pure. Its demands are as just, and its terms as favourable as could be any of the terms of mere law. And *such* a law has been given in part in order to show that justification by the law is out of the question. If men could not be justified by a law so pure, and equal, and just; so reasonable in all its requirements and so perfect, how could they expect to be justified by conformity to any *inferior* or *less perfect* rule of life? The fact, therefore, that no one can be justified by the pure law revealed on mount Sinai, for ever settles the question about the possibility of being justified by law.

22. *But the Scripture.* The Old Testament (Note, John v. 39), containing the law of Moses. ¶ *Hath concluded all under sin.* Has shut up (συνέκλεισεν) all under the condemnation of sin; that is, has declared all men, no matter what their rank and external character, to be sinners. Of course, they cannot be justified by that law which declares them to be guilty, and which condemns them, any more than the law of the land will acquit a murderer, and pronounce him innocent, at the same time that it holds him to be guilty. In regard to

promise <sup>a</sup> by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we  
<sup>a</sup> Ro.3.9,19,23.

the meaning of the expression here used; see Note on Rom. xi. 32; comp. Rom. iii. 9, 10. *That the promise by faith of Jesus Christ, &c.* That the promise referred to in the transaction with Abraham, the promise of justification and life by faith in the Messiah. Here we see *one* design of the law. It was to show that they could not be justified by their own works, to *hedge up their way* in regard to justification by their own righteousness, and to show them their need of a better righteousness. The law accomplishes the same end now. It shows men that they are guilty; and it does it in order that they may be brought under the influence of the pure system of the gospel, and become interested in the promises which are connected with eternal salvation.

23. *But before faith came.* That is, the system of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus. Faith here denotes the Christian religion, because faith is its distinguishing characteristic. ¶ *We were kept under the law.* We, who were sinners; we, who have violated the law. It is a general truth, that before the gospel was introduced, men were under the condemning sentence of the law. ¶ *Shut up unto the faith.* Enclosed by the law with reference to the full and glorious revelation of a system of salvation by faith. The design and tendency of the law was to shut us up to that as the only method of salvation. All other means failed. The law condemned every other mode, and the law condemned all who attempted to be justified in any other way. Man, therefore, was shut up to that as his last hope; and could look only to that for any possible prospect of salvation. The word which in this verse is rendered "were kept" (ἡφρουρούμεθα), usually means to guard or watch, as in a castle, or as prisoners are guarded; and though the word should not be pressed too far in the interpretation,

were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law <sup>b</sup> was our  
<sup>b</sup> Col.2.17; He.9.9,10.

yet it implies that there was a *rigid scrutiny* observed; that the law guarded them; that there was no way of escape; and that they were shut up, as prisoners under sentence of death, to the only hope, which was that of *pardon*. ¶ *Unto the faith, &c.* That was the only hope. The law condemned them, and offered no hope of escape. Their only hope was in that system which was to be revealed through the Messiah, the system which extended forgiveness on the ground of faith in his atoning blood.

24. *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster.* The word rendered *schoolmaster* (παιδαγωγός, whence the word *pedagogue*), referred originally to a slave or freedman, to whose care boys were committed, and who accompanied them to the public schools. The idea here is not that of *instructor*, but there is reference to the office and duty of the *pædagogus* among the ancients. The office was usually intrusted to slaves or freedmen. It is true, that when the *pædagogus* was properly qualified, he assisted the children committed to his care in preparing their lessons. But still his main duty was not *instruction*, but it was to watch over the boys; to restrain them from evil and temptation; and to conduct them to the schools, where they might receive instruction. See, for illustrations of this, Wetstein, Bloomfield, &c. In the passage before us, the proper notion of *pedagogue* is retained. In our sense of the word *schoolmaster*, Christ is the schoolmaster, and not the law. The law performs the office of the ancient *pedagogue*, to *lead us to the teacher* or the *instructor*. That teacher or instructor is Christ. The ways in which the law does this may be the following:—(1.) *It restrains* us and rebukes us, and keeps us as the ancient *pedagogue* did his boys. (2.) The whole law was designed to be introductory to Christ. The sacrifices and

schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

*a* John 1.12; 1 John 3.1,2.

offerings were designed to shadow forth the Messiah, and to introduce him to the world. (3.) The moral law—the law of God—shows men their sin and danger, and thus leads them to the Saviour. It condemns them, and thus prepares them to welcome the offer of pardon through a Redeemer. (4.) It still does this. The whole economy of the Jews was designed to do this; and under the preaching of the gospel it is still done. Men see that they are condemned; they are convinced by the law that they cannot save themselves, and thus they are led to the Redeemer. The effect of the preached gospel is to show men their sins, and thus to be preparatory to the embracing of the offer of pardon. Hence the importance of preaching the law still; and hence it is needful that men should be made to feel that they are sinners, in order that they may be prepared to embrace the offers of mercy; comp. Note on Rom. x. 4.

25. *But after that faith is come.* The scheme of salvation by faith. After that is revealed; see Note on ver. 23. ¶ *We are no longer under a schoolmaster.* Under the *pædagogus*, or pedagogue. We are not kept in restraint, and under bondage, and led along to another to receive instruction. We are directly under the great Teacher, the Instructor himself; and have a kind of freedom which we were not allowed before. The bondage and servitude have passed away; and we are free from the burdensome ceremonies and expensive rites (comp. Note on Acts xv. 10) of the Jewish law, and from the sense of condemnation which it imposes. This was true of the converts from Judaism to Christianity—that they became free from the burdensome rites of the law; and it is true of all converts to the faith of Christ, that, having been made to see their sin by the law, and

26 For ye are all the children *a* of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For *b* as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.

28 There is *c* neither Jew nor

*b* Ro.6.3.

*c* Col.3.11.

having been conducted by it to the cross of the Redeemer, they are now made free.

26. *For ye are all the children of God, &c.* All who bear the Christian name—the converts from among the Jews and Gentiles alike; see Note on John i. 12. The idea here is, that they are no longer under tutors and governors; they are no longer subject to the direction and will of the *pædagogus*; they are arrived at age, and are admitted to the privileges of sons; see Note on chap. iv. 1. The language here is derived from the fact, that until the son arrived at age, he was in many respects not different from a servant. He was under laws and restraints; and subject to the will of another. When of age, he entered on the privileges of heirship, and was free to act for himself. Thus, under the law, men were under restraints, and subject to heavy exactions. Under the gospel, they are free, and admitted to the privileges of the sons of God.

27. *For as many of you.* Whether by nature Jews or Gentiles. ¶ *As have been baptized into Christ.* Or unto (*eis*—the same preposition which in ver. 24 is rendered unto) Christ. That is, they were baptized with reference to him, or receiving him as the Saviour; see this explained in the Note on Rom. vi. 3. ¶ *Have put on Christ.* That is, they have put on his sentiments, opinions, characteristic traits, &c., as a man clothes himself. This language was common among the ancient writers; see it explained in the Note on Rom. xiii. 14.

28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek.* All are on a level; all are saved in the same way; all are entitled to the same privileges. There is no favoritism on account of birth, beauty, or blood. All confess that they are sinners; all are saved by the merits of the same Saviour; all are admitted to



Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor fe-

male: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

the same privileges as children of God. The word "Greek" here is used to denote the Gentiles generally; since the whole world was divided by the Jews into "Jews and Greeks"—the Greeks being the foreign nation best known to them. The Syriac renders it here "*Aramean*,"—using the word to denote the Gentiles generally. The meaning is, that whatever was the birth, or rank, or nation, or colour, or complexion, all under the gospel were on a level. They were admitted to the same privileges, and endowed with the same hopes of eternal life. This does not mean that all the civil distinctions among men are to be disregarded. It does not mean that no respect is to be shown to those in office, or to men in elevated rank. It does not mean that all are on a level in regard to talents, comforts, or wealth; but it means *only* that all men are on a level *in regard to religion*. This is the sole point under discussion; and the interpretation should be limited to this. It is not a fact that men are on a level in all things, nor is it a fact that the gospel designs to break down all the distinctions of society. Paul means to teach that no man has any preference or advantage in the kingdom of God because he is a rich man, or because he is of elevated rank; no one is under any disadvantage because he is poor, or because he is ignorant, or a slave. All at the foot of the cross are sinners; all at the communion table are saved by the same grace; all who enter into heaven, will enter clothed in the same robes of salvation, and arranged, not as princes and nobles, and rich men and poor men, in separate orders and ranks, but mingling together as redeemed by the same blood, and arranged in ranks according to their eminence in holiness; comp. my Notes on Isa. lvi. 8. ¶ *There is neither bond nor free*. The condition of a free man does not give him any peculiar claims or advantages in regard to religion; and the condition of a slave does not ex-

clude him from the hope of heaven, or from being regarded as a child of God, on the same terms, and entitled to the same privileges as his master. In regard to religion, they are on the same level. They are alike sinners, and are alike saved by grace. They sit down at the same communion table; and they look forward to the same heaven. Christianity does not admit the one to favour because he is free, or exclude the other because he is a slave. Nor, when they are admitted to favour, does it give the one a right to lord it over the other, or to feel that he is of any more value in the eye of the Redeemer, or any nearer to his heart. The essential idea is, that they are on a level, and that they are admitted to the favour of God without respect to their external condition in society. I do not see any evidence in *this* passage that the Christian religion designed to abolish slavery, any more than I do in the following phrase, "there is neither male nor female," that it was intended to abolish the distinction of the sexes; nor do I see in this passage any evidence that there should not be proper respect shown by the servant to his master, though both of them are Christians, any more than there is in the following phrase, that suitable respect should not be shown in the intercourse with the sexes; comp. 1 Tim. vi. 1—5. But the proof is explicit, that masters and slaves may alike become Christians on the same terms, and are, in regard to their religious privileges and hopes, on a level. No peculiar favour is shown to the one, in the matter of salvation, because he is free, nor is the other excluded because he is a slave. And from this it follows:—(1.) That they should sit down to the same communion table. There should be no invidious and odious distinctions there. (2.) They should be regarded alike as Christian brethren in the house of God, and should be addressed and treated accordingly. (3.) The slave should excite the interest, and receive the watchful care of the pastor, as well

as his master. Indeed, he may need it more; and from his ignorance, and the fewness of his opportunities, it may be proper that special attention should be bestowed on him. In regard to this doctrine of Christianity, that there is neither "bond nor free" among those who are saved, or that all are on a level in regard to salvation, we may remark further, (1.) That it is peculiar to Christianity. All other systems of religion and philosophy make different ranks, and endeavour to promote the distinctions of *caste* among men. They teach that certain men are the favourites of heaven, in virtue of their birth or their rank in life, or that they have peculiar facilities for salvation. Thus, in India the Brahmin is regarded as, by his birth, the favourite of heaven, and all others are supposed to be of a degraded rank. The great effort of men, in their systems of religion and philosophy, has been to show that there are favoured ranks and classes, and to make permanent distinctions on account of birth and blood. Christianity regards all men as made of one blood to dwell on all the face of the earth (see Note, Acts xvii. 26), and esteems them all to be equal in the matter of salvation; and whatever notions of *equality* prevail in the world are to be traced to the influence of the Christian religion. (2.) If men are regarded as equal before God, and as entitled to the same privileges of salvation; if there is in the great work of redemption "neither bond nor free," and those who are in the church are on a level, then such a view will induce a master to treat his slave with kindness, when that relation exists. The master who has any right feelings, will regard his servant as a Christian brother, redeemed by the same blood as himself, and destined to the same heaven. He will esteem him not as "a chattel" or "a thing," or as a piece "of property," but he will regard him as an immortal being, destined with himself to the same heaven, and about to sit down with him in the realms of glory. How can he treat such a brother with unkindness or severity? How can he

rise from the same communion table with him, and give way to violent feelings against him, and regard him and treat him as if he were a brute? And Christianity, by the same principle that "the slave is a brother in the Lord," will do more to mitigate the horrors of slavery, than all the enactments that men can make, and all the other views and doctrines which can be made to prevail in society; see Philem. 16. (3.) This doctrine would lead to universal emancipation. All are on a level before God. In the kingdom of Jesus there is neither bond nor free. One is as much an object of favour as another. With this feeling, how can a Christian hold his fellow Christian in bondage? How can he regard as "a chattel" or "a thing," one who, like himself, is an heir of glory? How can he *sell* him on whom the blood of Jesus has been sprinkled? Let him feel that his slave is his equal in the sight of God; that with himself he is an heir of glory; that together they are soon to stand on Mount Zion above; that the slave is an immortal being, and has been redeemed by the blood of Calvary, and how can he hold such a being in bondage, and how can he transfer him from place to place and from hand to hand for gold? If all masters and all slaves were to become Christians, slavery would at once cease; and the prevalence of the single principle before us would put an end to all the ways in which man oppresses his fellow-man. Accordingly, it is well known that in about three centuries the influence of Christianity banished slavery from the Roman empire. ¶ *There is neither male nor female.* Neither the male nor the female have any peculiar advantages for salvation. There are no favours shown on account of sex. Both sexes are, in this respect, on a level. This does not mean, of course, that the sexes are to be regarded as in all respects equal; nor can it mean that the two sexes may not have peculiar duties and privileges in other respects. It does not prove that one of the sexes may not perform important offices in the church, which would not

29 And if ye be Christ's, then <sup>a</sup> are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs <sup>b</sup> according to the promise.

<sup>a</sup> ver. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Ro. 8. 17.

be proper for the other. It does not prove that the duties of the ministry are to be performed by the female sex, nor that the various duties of domestic life, nor the various offices of society, should be performed without any reference to the distinction of sex. The interpretation should be confined to the matter under consideration; and the passage proves only that *in regard to salvation* they are on a level. One sex is not to be regarded as peculiarly the favourite of heaven, and the other to be excluded. Christianity thus elevates the female sex to an equality with the male, on the most important of all interests; and it has in this way made most important changes in the world wherever it has prevailed. Everywhere but in connection with the Christian religion, woman has been degraded. She has been kept in ignorance. She has been treated as an inferior in all respects. She has been doomed to unpitied drudgery, and ignorance, and toil. So she was among the ancient Greeks and Romans; so she is among the savages of America; so she is in China, and India, and in the islands of the sea; so she is regarded in the Koran, and in all Mohammedan countries. It is Christianity alone which has elevated her; and nowhere on earth does man regard the mother of his children as an intelligent companion and friend, except where the influence of the Christian religion has been felt. At the communion table, at the foot of the cross, and in the hopes of heaven, she is on a level with man; and this fact diffuses a mild, and purifying, and elevating influence over all the relations of life. Woman has been raised from deep degradation by the influence of Christianity; and, let me add, she has everywhere acknowledged the debt of gratitude, and devoted herself, as under a deep sense of obligation, to lessening the burdens of humanity, and to the work of elevating the degraded, instructing the ig-

## CHAPTER IV.

NOW I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth

norant, and comforting the afflicted, all over the world. Never has a debt been better repaid, or the advantages of elevating one portion of the race been more apparent. ¶ *For ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* You are all equally accepted through the Lord Jesus Christ; or you are all on the same level, and entitled to the same privileges in your Christian profession. Bond and free, male and female, Jew and Greek, are admitted to equal privileges, and are equally acceptable before God. And the church of God, no matter what may be the complexion, the country, the habits, or the rank of its members, is one. Every man on whom is the image and the blood of Christ, is a BROTHER to every other one who bears that image, and should be treated accordingly. What an influence would be excited in the breaking up of the distinctions of rank and *caste* among men; what an effect in abolishing the prejudice on account of colour and country, if this were universally believed and felt!

29. *And if ye be Christ's.* If you belong to the Messiah, and are interested in his work. ¶ *Then are ye Abraham's seed.* The promise made to Abraham related to the Messiah. It was a promise that in him all should be blessed. Abraham believed in that Messiah, and was distinguished for his faith in him who was to come. If they believed in Christ, therefore, they showed that they were the spiritual descendants of Abraham. No matter whether they were Jews or Gentiles; whether they had been circumcised or not, they had the same spirit which he evinced, and were interested in the promises made to him. ¶ *And heirs according to the promise;* see Rom. viii. 17. Are heirs of God. You inherit the blessings promised to Abraham, and partake of the felicity to which he looked forward. You have become truly heirs of God, and this is in accordance with the promise

nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

made to Abraham. It is not by the obedience of the law; it is by faith—in the same way that Abraham possessed the blessing;—an arrangement *before* the giving of the law, and therefore one that may include *all*, whether Jews or Gentiles. All are on a level; and all are alike the children of God, and in the same manner, and on the same terms that Abraham was.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### ANALYSIS.

THE design of this chapter is, to show the effect of being under the law, and the inconsistency of that kind of bondage or servitude with the freedom which is vouchsafed to the true children of God by the gospel. It is, in accordance with the whole drift of the epistle, to recall the Galatians to just views of the gospel; and to convince them of their error in returning to the practice of the Mosaic rites and customs. In the previous chapter he had shown them that believers in the gospel were the true children of Abraham; that they had been delivered from the curse of the law; that the law was a school-master to lead them to Christ, and that they were all the children of God. To illustrate this further, and to show them the true nature of the freedom which they had as the children of God, is the design of the argument in this chapter. He therefore states:

(1.) That it was under the gospel only that they received the full advantages of freedom; ver. 1—5. Before Christ came, indeed, there were true children of God, and heirs of life. But they were in the condition of *minors*; they had not the privileges of *sons*. An heir to a great estate, says the apostle (ver. 1, 2), is treated substantially as if he were a servant. He is under tutors and governors; he is not permitted to enter on his inheritance; he is kept under the restraint of law. So it was with the people of God under the law of Moses. They were under restraints, and were admitted to comparatively

2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

few of the privileges of the children of God. But Christ came to redeem those who were under the law, and to place them in the elevated condition of adopted sons; ver. 4, 5. They were no longer servants; and it was as unreasonable that they should conform again to the Mosaic rites and customs, as it would be for the heir of full age, and who has entered on his inheritance, to return to the condition of minorship, and to be placed again under tutors and governors, and to be treated as a servant.

(2.) As sons of God, God had sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, and they were enabled to cry Abba, Father. They were no longer servants, but heirs of God, and should avail themselves of the privileges of heirs; ver. 6, 7.

(3.) Sustaining this relation, and being admitted to these privileges, the apostle remonstrates with them for returning again to the “weak and beggarly elements” of the former dispensation—the condition of servitude to rites and customs in which they were before they embraced the gospel; ver. 8—11. When they were ignorant of God, they served those who were no gods, and there was some excuse for that; ver. 8. But now they had known God, they were acquainted with his laws; they were admitted to the privileges of his children; they were made free, and there could be no excuse for returning again to the bondage of those who had no true knowledge of the liberty which the gospel gave. Yet they observed days and times as though these were binding, and they had never been freed from them (ver. 10); and the apostle says, that he is afraid that his labours bestowed on them, to make them acquainted with the plan of redemption, had been in vain.

(4.) To bring them to a just sense of their error, he reminds them of their former attachment to him, ver. 12—20. He had indeed preached to them amidst much infirmity, and much that was fitted to prejudice

them against him (ver. 13) ; but they had disregarded that, and had evinced towards him the highest proofs of attachment—so, much so, that they had received him as an angel of God (ver. 14), and had been ready to pluck out their own eyes to give them to him, ver. 15. With great force, therefore, he asks them why they had changed their views towards him so far as to forsake his doctrines? Had he become their enemy by telling the truth? ver. 16. He tenderly addresses them, therefore, as little children, and says, that he has the deepest solicitude for their welfare, and the deepest anxiety on account of their danger—a solicitude which he compares (ver. 19,) with the pains of child-birth.

(5.) In order to enforce the whole subject, and to show the true nature of the conformity to the law compared with the liberty of the gospel, he allegorizes an interesting part of the Mosaic history—the history of the two children of Abraham; ver. 21—31. The condition of Hagar—a slave—under the command of a master—harshly treated—cast out and disowned, was an apt illustration of the condition of those who were under the servitude of the law. It would strikingly represent Mount Sinai, and the law that was promulgated there, and the condition of those who were under the law. That, too, was a condition of servitude. The law was stern, and showed no mercy. It was like a master of a slave, and would treat those who were under it with a rigidity that might be compared with the condition of Hagar and her son; ver. 24, 25. That same Mount Sinai also was a fair representation of Jerusalem as it was then—a city full of rites and ceremonies, where the law reigned with rigour, where there was a burdensome system of religion, and where there was none of the freedom which the gospel would furnish; ver. 25. On the other hand, the children of the free woman were an apt illustration of those who were made free from the oppressive ceremonies of the law by the gospel; ver. 22. *That Jerusalem was free.* The new system from heaven was one of liberty and rejoicing; ver.

26, 27. Christians were, like Isaac, the children of promise, and were not slaves to the law; ver. 28, 31. And as there was a command (ver. 30) to cast out the bondwoman and her son, so the command now was to reject all that would bring the mind into ignominious servitude, and prevent its enjoying the full freedom of the gospel. The whole argument is, that it would be as unreasonable for those who were Christians to submit again to the Jewish rites and ceremonies, as it would be for a freeman to sell himself into slavery. And the design of the whole is, to recall them from the conformity to Jewish rites and customs, and from their regarding them as now binding on Christians.

1. *Now I say.* He had before said (ch. iii. 24, 25) that while they were under the law they were in a state of minority. This sentiment he proceeds further to illustrate by showing the true condition of one who was a minor. ¶ *That the heir.* Any heir to an estate, or one who has a prospect of an inheritance. No matter how great is the estate; no matter how wealthy his father; no matter to how elevated a rank he may be raised on the moment that he enters on his inheritance, yet till that time he is in the condition of a servant. ¶ *As long as he is a child.* Until he arrives at the age. The word rendered "child" (*νήπιος*) properly means an infant; literally, one not speaking (*insep. un, ἔπος*), and hence a child or babe, but without any definite limitation.—*Rob.* It is used as the word infant is with us in law, to denote a minor. ¶ *Differeth nothing from a servant.* That is, he has no more control of his property; he has it not at his command. This does not mean that he does not differ in any respect, but only that in the matter under consideration he does not differ. He differs in his prospects of inheriting the property, and in the affections of the father, and usually in the advantages of education, and in the respect and attention shown him. but in regard to property, he does not differ, and he is like a servant, under the control and direction of others. ¶ *Though he be lord*

### 3 Even so we, when we were 1 rudiments. Col.2.8.20.

of all. That is, in prospect. He has a prospective right to all the property, which no one else has. The word "lord" here (κύριος), is used in the same sense in which it is often in the Scriptures, to denote master or owner. The idea which this is designed to illustrate is, that the condition of the Jews before the coming of the Messiah was inferior in many respects to what the condition of the friends of God would be under him—as inferior as the condition of an heir was before he was of age, to what it would be when he should enter on his inheritance. The Jews claimed, indeed, that they were the children or the sons of God, a title which the apostle would not withhold from the pious part of the nation; but it was a condition in which they had not entered on the full inheritance, and which was far inferior to that of those who had embraced the Messiah, and who were admitted to the full privileges of sonship. They were indeed heirs. They were interested in the promises. But still they were in a condition of comparative servitude, and could be made free only by the gospel.

2. *But is under.* Is subject to their control and direction. ¶ *Tutors.* The word *tutor* with us properly means *instructor*. But this is not quite the sense of the original. The word *παιδαγωγός* properly means a steward, manager, agent; Matt. xx. 8; Luke viii. 3. As used here, it refers to one—usually a slave or a freedman—to whose care the boys of a family were committed, who trained them up, accompanied them to school, or sometimes instructed them at home; comp. Note on ch. iii. 24. Such a one would have the control of them. ¶ *And governors.* This word (οἰκονόμος) means a house-manager, an overseer, a steward. It properly refers to one who had authority over the slaves or servants of a family, to assign them their tasks and portions. They generally, also, had the management of the affairs of the household, and of the accounts. They were commonly

children, were in bondage under the <sup>1</sup> elements of the world :

slaves, who were intrusted with this office as a reward for fidelity; though sometimes free persons were employed; Luke xvi. 1, 3, 8. These persons had also charge of the sons of a family, probably in respect to their *pecuniary* matters, and thus differed from those called *tutors*. It is not necessary, however, to mark the difference in the words with great accuracy. The general meaning of the apostle is, that the heir was under government and restraint. ¶ *Until the time appointed of the father.* The time fixed for his entering on the inheritance. The time when he chose to give him his portion of the property. The law with us fixes the age at twenty-one when a son shall be at liberty to manage for himself. Other countries have affixed other times. But still, the time when the son shall inherit the father's property must be fixed by the father himself if he is living, or may be fixed by his will if he is deceased. The son cannot *claim* the property when he comes of age.

3. *Even so we.* We who were Jews—for so I think the word here is to be limited, and not extended to the heathen, as Bloomfield supposes. The reasons for limiting it are, (1.) That the heathens in no sense sustained such a relation to the law and promises of God as is here supposed; (2.) Such an interpretation would not be pertinent to the design of Paul. He is stating reasons why there should not be subjection to the laws of Moses, and his argument is, that that condition was like that of bondage or minorship. ¶ *When we were children (παιρά).* Minors; see Note on ver. 1. The word is not *sons*; but the idea is, that they were in a state of nonage; and though heirs, yet were under severe discipline and regimen. They were under a kind of government that was fitted to that state, and not to the condition of those who had entered on their inheritance. ¶ *Were in bondage.* In a state of servitude. Treated as servants or slaves. ¶ *Under the ele-*

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his

Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

*ments of the world.* Marg. *Rudiments.* The word rendered *elements* (sing. στοιχείον), properly means a row or series; a little step; a pin or peg, as the gnomon of a dial; and then any thing *elementary*, as a sound, a letter. It then denotes the elements or rudiments of any kind of instruction, and in the New Testament is applied to the first lessons or principles of religion; Heb. v. 15. It is applied to the elements or component parts of the physical world; 2 Pet. iii. 10, 12. Here the figure is kept up of the reference to the infant (ver. 1, 3); and the idea is, that lessons were taught under the Jewish system adapted to their non-age—to a state of childhood. They were treated as children under tutors and governors. The phrase “the elements of the world,” occurs also in Col. ii. 8, 20. In ver. 9 of this chapter, Paul speaks of these lessons as “beggarly elements,” referring to the same thing as here. Different opinions have been held as to the reason why the Jewish institutions are here called “the elements of the world.” Rosenmüller supposes it was because many of those rites were common to the Jews and to the heathen—as they also had altars, sacrifices, temples, libations, &c. Doddridge supposes it was because those rites were adapted to the low conceptions of children, who were most affected with sensible objects, and have no taste for spiritual and heavenly things. Locke supposes it was because those institutions led them not beyond this world, or into the possession and taste of their heavenly inheritance. It is probable that there is allusion to the Jewish manner of speaking, so common in the Scriptures, where this world is opposed to the kingdom of God, and where it is spoken of as transient and worthless compared with the future glory. The world is fading, unsatisfactory, temporary. In allusion to this common use of the word, the Jewish institutions are called the *worldly rudiments*. It is not that they were in themselves evil—for that

is not true; it is not that they were adapted to foster a worldly spirit—for that is not true; it is not that they had their origin from this world—for that is not true; nor is it from the fact that they resembled the institutions of the heathen world—for that is as little true; but it is, that, like the things of the world, they were transient, temporary, and of little value. They were unsatisfactory in their nature, and were soon to pass away, and to give place to a better system—as the things of this world are soon to give place to heaven.

4. *But when the fulness of the time was come.* The full time appointed by the Father; the completion (*filling up*, πληρωμα,) of the designated period for the coming of the Messiah; see Notes on Isa. xlix. 7, 8; 2 Cor. vi. 2. The sense is, that the time which had been predicted, and when it was proper that he should come, was complete. The exact period had arrived when all things were ready for his coming. It is often asked why he did not come sooner, and why mankind did not have the benefit of his incarnation and atonement immediately after the fall? Why were four thousand dark and gloomy years allowed to roll on, and the world suffered to sink deeper and deeper in ignorance and sin? To these questions perhaps no answer entirely satisfactory can be given. God undoubtedly saw reasons which we cannot see, and reasons which we shall approve if they are disclosed to us. It may be observed, however, that this delay of redemption was in entire accordance with the whole system of divine arrangements, and with all the divine interpositions in favour of men. Men are suffered long to pine in want, to suffer from disease, to encounter the evils of ignorance, before interposition is granted. On all the subjects connected with human comfort and improvement, the same questions may be asked as on the subject of redemption. Why was the invention of the art of printing so long delayed,

and men suffered to remain in ignorance? Why was the discovery of vaccination delayed so long, and millions suffered to die who might have been saved? Why was not the bark of Peru sooner known, and why did so many millions die who might have been saved by its use? So of most of the medicines, and of the arts and inventions that go to ward off disease, and to promote the intelligence, the comfort, and the salvation of man. In respect to *all* of these, it may be true that they are made known *at the very best time*, the time that will on the whole most advance the welfare of the race. And so of the incarnation and work of the Saviour. It was seen by God to be the *best* time, the time when on the whole the race would be most benefited by his coming. Even with our limited and imperfect vision, we can see the following things in regard to its being the most fit and proper time. (1.) It was just the time when all the prophecies centred in him, and when there could be no doubt about their fulfilment. It was important that such an event should be predicted in order that there might be full evidence that he came from heaven; and yet in order that prophecy may be seen to have been uttered by God, it must be so far before the event as to make it impossible to have been the result of mere human conjecture. (2.) It was proper that the world should be brought to see its need of a Saviour, and that a fair and satisfactory opportunity should be given to men to try all other schemes of salvation that they might be prepared to welcome this. This had been done. Four thousand years were sufficient to show to man his own powers, and to give him an opportunity to devise some scheme of salvation. The opportunity had been furnished under every circumstance that could be deemed favourable. The most profound and splendid talent of the world had been brought to bear on it, especially in Greece and Rome; and ample opportunity had been given to make a fair trial of the various systems of religion devised on national happiness and individual welfare; their

power to meet and arrest crime; to purify the heart; to promote public morals, and to support man in his trials; their power to conduct him to the true God, and to give him a well-founded hope of immortality. All had failed; and then it was a proper time for the Son of God to come and to reveal a better system. (3.) It was a time when the world was at peace. The temple of Janus, closed only in times of peace, was then shut, though it had been but once closed before during the Roman history. What an appropriate time for the "Prince of Peace" to come! The world was, to a great extent, under the Roman sceptre. Communications between different parts of the world were then more rapid and secure than they had been at any former period, and the gospel could be more easily propagated. Further, the Jews were scattered in almost all lands, acquainted with the promises, looking for the Messiah, furnishing facilities to their own countrymen the apostles to preach the gospel in numerous synagogues, and qualified, if they embraced the Messiah, to become most zealous and devoted missionaries. The same language, the Greek, was, moreover, after the time of Alexander the Great, the common language of no small part of the world, or at least was spoken and understood among a considerable portion of the nations of the earth. At no period before had there been so extensive a use of the same language. (4.) It was a proper period to make the new system known. It accorded with the benevolence of God, that it should be delayed no longer than that the world should be in a suitable state for receiving the Redeemer. When that period, therefore, had arrived, God did not delay, but sent his Son on the great work of the world's redemption. ¶ *God sent forth his Son.* This implies that the Son of God had an existence before his incarnation; see John xvi. 28. The Saviour is often represented as *sent* into the world, and as *coming forth* from God. ¶ *Made of a woman,* In human nature; born of a woman. This also implies that he had another



5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit <sup>a</sup> of his

<sup>a</sup> Ro. 8.15,17.

nature than that which was derived from the woman. On the supposition that he was a mere man, how unmeaning would this assertion be! How natural to ask, in what other way could he appear than to be born of a woman? Why was *he* particularly designated as coming into the world in this manner? How strange would it sound if it were said, "In the sixteenth century came Faustus Socinus preaching Unitarianism, *made of a woman!*" or, "In the eighteenth century came Dr. Joseph Priestley, *born of a woman*, preaching the doctrines of Socinus!" How else could they appear? would be the natural inquiry. What was there peculiar in their birth and origin that rendered such language necessary? The *language* implies that there were other ways in which the Saviour might have come; that there was something peculiar in the fact that *he* was born of a woman; and that there was some special reason why that fact should be made prominently a matter of record. The promise was (Gen. iii. 15) that the Messiah should be the "seed" or the descendant of woman; and Paul probably here alludes to the fulfilment of that promise. ¶ *Made under the law.* As one of the human race, partaking of human nature, he was subject to the law of God. As a man he was bound by its requirements, and subject to its control. He took his place under the law that he might accomplish an important purpose for those who were under it. He made himself subject to it that he might become one of them, and secure their redemption.

5. *To redeem them.* By his death as an atoning sacrifice; see Note on chap. iii. 13. ¶ *Them that were under the law.* Sinners, who had violated the law, and who were exposed to its dread penalty. ¶ *That*

Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

*we might receive the adoption of sons* Be adopted as the sons or the children of God; see Notes, John i. 12; Rom. viii. 15.

6. *And because ye are sons.* As a consequence of your being adopted into the family of God, and being regarded as his sons. It follows as a part of his purpose of adoption that his children shall have the spirit of the Lord Jesus. ¶ *The Spirit of his Son.* The spirit of the Lord Jesus; the spirit which animated him, or which he evinced. The idea is, that as the Lord Jesus was enabled to approach God with the language of endearment and love, so they would be. He, being the true and exalted Son of God, had the spirit appropriate to such a relation; they being adopted, and made like him, have the same spirit. The "spirit" here referred to does not mean, as I suppose, the Holy Spirit as such; nor the miraculous endowments of the Holy Spirit, but the spirit which made them like the Lord Jesus; the spirit by which they were enabled to approach God as his children, and use the reverent, and tender, and affectionate language of a child addressing a father. It is that language used by Christians when they have evidence of adoption; the expression of the warm, and elevated, and glowing emotions which they have when they can approach God as their God, and address him as *their* Father. ¶ *Crying.* That is, the spirit thus cries, Πνῦμα—κράζον. Comp. Notes, Rom. viii. 26, 27. In Rom. viii. 15 it is, "wherewith we cry." ¶ *Abba, Father;* see Note, Rom. viii. 15. It is said in the Babylonian Gemara, a Jewish work, that it was not permitted slaves to use the title of *Abba* in addressing the master of the family to which they belonged. If so, then the language which Christians use

8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

1 or, back.

here represented as using is the language of freemen, and denotes that they are not under the servitude of sin.

7. *Wherefore.* In consequence of this privilege of addressing God as your Father. ¶ *Thou art no more.* You who are Christians. ¶ *A servant.* In the servitude of sin; or treated as a servant by being bound under the oppressive rites and ceremonies of the law; comp. Note on ver. 3. ¶ *But a son.* A child of God, adopted into his family, and to be treated as a son. ¶ *And if a son, &c.* Entitled to all the privileges of a son, and of course to be regarded as an heir through the Redeemer, and with him. See the sentiment here expressed explained in the Note on Rom. viii. 17.

8. *Howbeit.* But, ἄλλὰ. The address in this verse and the following is evidently to the portion of the Galatians who had been heathen. This is probably indicated by the particle ἄλλὰ, but denoting a transition. In the previous verses Paul had evidently had the Jewish converts more particularly in his eye, and had described their former condition as one of servitude to the Mosaic rites and customs, and had shown the inconveniences of that condition, compared with the freedom imparted by the gospel. To complete the description, he refers also to the Gentiles, as a condition of worse servitude still, and shows (ver. 9) the absurdity of their turning back to a state of bondage of any kind, after the glorious deliverance which they had obtained from the degrading servitude of pagan rites. The sense is, "If the Jews were in such a state of servitude, how much more galling and severe was that of those who had been heathens. Yet from *that* servitude the gospel had delivered them, and made them freemen. How absurd now to go back to a state of vassalage, and to become servants under the oppressive rites of the Jewish law!" ¶ *When*

9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye <sup>1</sup> again to the weak and beggarly <sup>2</sup> elements,

2 rudiments.

*ye knew not God.* In your state of heathenism, when you had no knowledge of the true God and of his service. The object is not to apologize for what they did, because they did not know God; it is to state the fact that they were in a state of gross and galling servitude. ¶ *Ye did service.* This does not express the force of the original. The meaning is, "Ye were slaves to (δουλεύσατε); you were in a condition of servitude, as opposed to the freedom of the gospel;" comp. ver. 3, where the same word is used to describe the state of the Jews. The drift of the apostle is, to show that the Jews and Gentiles, before their conversion to Christianity, were in a state of vassalage or servitude, and that it was absurd in the highest degree to return to that condition again. ¶ *Unto them which by nature are no gods.* Idols, or false gods. The expression "by nature," φύσει, according to Grotius, means, *in fact, re ipsa*. The sense is, that they really had no pretensions to divinity. Many of them were imaginary beings; many were the objects of creation, as the sun, and winds, and streams; and many were departed heroes that had been exalted to be objects of worship. Yet the servitude was real. It fettered their faculties; controlled their powers; bound their imagination, and commanded their time and property, and made them slaves. Idolatry is always slavery; and the servitude of sinners to their passions and appetites, to lust and gold, and ambition, is not less galling and severe than was the servitude to the pagan gods or the Jewish rites, or than is the servitude of the African now to a harsh and cruel master. Of all Christians it may be said that before their conversion they "did service," or were slaves to harsh and cruel masters; and nothing but the gospel has made them free. It may be added, that the chains of idolatry all over the world are as

whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

fast riveted and as galling as they were in Galatia, and that nothing but the same gospel which Paul preached there can break those chains and restore man to freedom.

9. *But now, &c.* The sense is, that since they had been made free from their ignoble servitude in the worship of false gods, and had been admitted to the freedom found in the worship of the true God, it was absurd that they should return again to that which was truly slavery or bondage, the observance of the rites of the Jewish law. ¶ *That ye have known God.* The true God, and the ease and freedom of his service in the gospel. ¶ *Or rather are known of God.* The sense is, "Or, to speak more accurately or precisely, are known by God." The object of this correction is to avoid the impression which might be derived from the former phrase that their acquaintance with God was owing to themselves. He therefore states, that it was rather that they were known of God; that it was all owing to him that they had been brought to an acquaintance with himself. Perhaps, also, he means to bring into view the idea that it was a favour and privilege to be known by God, and that therefore it was the more absurd to turn back to the weak and beggarly elements. ¶ *How turn ye again.* Marg. *Back.* "How is it that you are returning to such a bondage?" The question implies surprise and indignation that they should do it. ¶ *To the weak and beggarly elements.* To the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law, imposing a servitude really not less severe than the customs of paganism. On the word *elements*, see Note on ver. 3. They are called "weak" because they had no power to save the soul; no power to justify the sinner before God. They are called "beggarly" (Gr. *πτωχὰ*, *poor*), because they could not impart spiritual riches. They really could confer few benefits on man. Or it may be, as Locke supposes, because the law kept men in the poor estate of pupils from

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

the full enjoyment of the inheritance; ver. 1—3. ¶ *Whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage.* As if you had a wish to be under servitude. The absurdity is as great as it would be for a man who had been freed from slavery to desire again his chains. They had been freed by the gospel from the galling servitude of heathenism, and they now again had sunk into the Jewish observances, as if they preferred slavery to freedom, and were willing to go from one form of it to another. The main idea is, that it is absurd for men who have been made free by the gospel to go back again into any kind of servitude or bondage. We may apply it to Christians now. Many sink into a kind of servitude not less galling than was that to sin before their conversion. Some become the slaves of mere ceremonies and forms in religion. Some are slaves to fashion, and the world yet rules them with the hand of a tyrant. They have escaped, it may be, from the galling chains of ambition, and degrading vice, and low sensuality; but they became slaves to the love of money, or of dress, or of the fashions of the world, as if they loved slavery and chains; and they seem no more able to break loose than the slave is to break the bonds which bind him. And some are slaves to some expensive and foolish habit. Professed Christians, and Christian ministers too, become slaves to the disgusting and loathsome habit of using tobacco, bound by a servitude as galling and as firm as that which ever shackled the limbs of an African. I grieve to add also that many professed Christians are slaves to the habit of "sitting long at the wine" and indulging in it freely. O that such knew the liberty of Christian freedom, and would break away from all such shackles, and show how the gospel frees men from all foolish and absurd customs!

10. *Ye observe.* The object of this verse is to specify some of the things to which they had become enslaved ¶ *Days.* The days here referred to

11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

are doubtless the days of the Jewish festivals. They had numerous days of such observances, and in addition to those specified in the Old Testament, the Jews had added many others as days commemorative of the destruction and rebuilding of the temple, and of other important events in their history. It is not a fair interpretation of this to suppose that the apostle refers to the *Sabbath*, properly so called, for this was a part of the Decalogue; and was observed by the Saviour himself, and by the apostles also. It is a fair interpretation to apply it to all those days which are not commanded to be kept holy in the Scriptures; and hence the passage is as applicable to the observance of saints' days, and days in honour of particular events in sacred history, as to the days observed by the Galatians. There is a real *servitude* in the observance of the numerous festivals, and fasts in the Papal communion and in some Protestant churches, as there was in the observance of the days in the Jewish ecclesiastical calendar, and for any thing that I can see, such observances are as inconsistent now with the freedom of the gospel as they were in the time of Paul. We should observe as seasons of holy time what it can be proved God has commanded us, and no more. ¶ *And months.* The festivals of the new moon, kept by the Jews. Num. x. 10; xxviii. 11—14. On this festival, in addition to the daily sacrifice, two bullocks, a ram, and seven sheep of a year old were offered in sacrifice. The appearance of the new-moon was announced by the sound of trumpets. See Jahn, *Archae.* § 352. ¶ *And times.* Stated times; festivals returning periodically, as the Passover, the feast of Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles. See Jahn, *Archae.* chap. 3. § 346—360. ¶ *And years.* The sabbatical year, or the year of jubilee. See Jahn as above.

11. *I am afraid of you, &c.* I have fears respecting you. His fears

12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are; ye have not injured me at all.

were that they had no genuine Christian principle. They had been so easily perverted and turned back to the servitude of ceremonies and rites, that he was apprehensive that there could be no real Christian principle in the case. What pastor has not often had such fears of his people, when he sees them turn to the weak and beggarly elements of the world, or when, after having "run well," he sees them become the slaves of fashion, or of some habit inconsistent with the simplicity of the gospel?

12. *Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am, &c.* There is great brevity in this passage, and no little obscurity, and a great many different interpretations have been given of it by commentators. The various views expressed may be seen in Bloomfield's *Crit. Dig.* Locke renders it, "Let you and I be as if we were all one, Think yourselves to be very me; as I in my own mind put no difference at all between you and myself." Koppe explains it thus: Imitate my example; for I, though a Jew by birth, care no more for Jewish rites than you." Rosenmüller explains it, "Imitate my manner of life in rejecting the Jewish rites; as I, having renounced the Jewish rites, was much like you when I preached the gospel to you." Other interpretations may be seen in Chandler, Doddridge, Calvin, &c. In our version there seems to be an impropriety of expression; for if he was as they were it would seem to be a matter of course that they would be like him, or would resemble him. The sense of the passage, however, it seems to me cannot be difficult. The reference is doubtless to the Jewish rites and customs, and to the question whether they were binding on Christians. Paul's object is to persuade them to abandon them. He appeals to them, therefore, by his own example. And it means evidently, "Imitate me in this thing. Follow my example, and yield no conformity to those rites and customs." The ground on which he

13 Ye know how, through <sup>a</sup> infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first:

14 And my temptation which

<sup>a</sup> 1 Co.2.3.

asks them to imitate him may be either, (1.) That *he* had abandoned them or, (2.) Because he asks them to *yield a point* to him. He had done so in many instances for their welfare, and had made many sacrifices for their salvation, and he now asks them to yield this *one point*, and to become as he was, and to cease these Jewish observances, as he had done. ¶ *For I am as ye are.* Gr. "For I as ye." This means, I suppose, "For I have conformed to your customs in many things. I have abandoned my own peculiarities; given up my customs as far as possible; conformed to you as Gentiles as far as I could do, in order to benefit and save you. I have laid aside the peculiarity of the Jew on the principle of becoming all things to all men (Notes, 1 Cor. ix. 20—22), in order that I might save you. I ask in return only the slight sacrifice that you will now become like me in the matter under consideration." ¶ *Ye have not injured me at all.* "It is not a personal matter. I have no cause of complaint. You have done me no personal wrong. There is no variance between us; no unkind feeling; no injury done as individuals. I may, therefore, with the more freedom, ask you to yield this point, when I assure you that I do not feel personally injured. I have no wrong to complain of, and I ask it on higher grounds than would be an individual request: it is for your good, and the good of the great cause." When Christians turn away from the truth, and disregard the instructions and exhortations of pastors, and become conformed to the world, it is not a personal matter, or a matter of personal offence to them, painful as it may be to them. They have no peculiar reason to say that they are personally injured. It is a higher matter. The cause suffers. The interests of religion are injured. The church at large is offended, and the Saviour is "wounded in the house of

was in my flesh ye despised not nor rejected; but received me as an angel <sup>b</sup> of God, *even* as Christ <sup>c</sup> Jesus.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Sa.19.27; Mal.2.7.

<sup>c</sup> Mat.10.40.

his friends." Conformity to the world, or a lapse into some sin, is a public offence, and should be regarded as an injury done to the cause of the Redeemer. It shows the magnanimity of Paul, that though they had abandoned his doctrines, and forgotten his love and his toils in their welfare, he did not regard it as a *personal* offence, and did not consider himself personally injured. An ambitious man or an impostor would have made that the main, if not the only thing.

13. *Ye know how.* To show them the folly of their embracing the new views which they had adopted, he reminds them of past times, and particularly of the strength of the attachment which they had evinced for him in former days. ¶ *Through infirmity of the flesh.* Gr. *Weakness* (*ἀσθένεια*); comp. Notes on 1 Cor. ii. 3; 2 Cor. x. 10; xii. 7.

14. *And my temptation.* *My trial*, the thing which was to me a trial and calamity. The meaning is, that he was afflicted with various calamities and infirmities, but that this did not hinder their receiving him as an angel from heaven. There is, however, a considerable variety in the MSS. on this verse. Many MSS., instead of "*my temptation*," read "*your temptation*;" and Mill maintains that this is the true reading. Griesbach hesitates between the two. But it is not very important to determine which is the true reading. If it should be "*your*," then it means that they were tempted by his infirmities to reject him; and so it amounts to about the same thing. The general sense is, that he had some bodily infirmity, perhaps some periodically returning disease, that was a great trial to him, which they bore with, with great patience and affection. What that was, he has not informed us, and conjecture is vain. ¶ *But received me as an angel of God.* With the utmost respect, as if I had been an angel sent from God. ¶ *Even*

15 Where <sup>1</sup> is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it *had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your

1 or, *what was*.

as Christ Jesus. As you would have done the Redeemer himself. Learn hence, (1.) That the Lord Jesus is superior to an angel of God. (2.) That the highest proof of attachment to a minister, is to receive him as the Saviour would be received. (3.) It showed their attachment to the Lord Jesus, that they received his apostle as they would have received the Saviour himself; comp. Mat. x. 40.

15. *Where is then the blessedness.* Marg. "What was"—in accordance with the Greek. The words "ye spake of" are not in the Greek, and should have been printed in Italic. But they obscure the sense at any rate. This is not to be regarded as a question, asking what had become of the blessedness, implying that it had departed; but it is rather to be regarded as an *exclamation*, referring to the happiness of that moment, and their affection and joy when they thus received him. "What blessedness you had then! How happy was that moment! What tenderness of affection! What overflowing joy!" It was a time full of joy, and love, and affectionate confidence. So Tindal well renders it, "How happy were ye then!" In this interpretation, Doddridge, Rosenmüller, Bloomfield, Koppe, Chandler, and others concur. Locke renders it, "What benedictions did you then pour out on me!" ¶ *For I bear you record.* I testify. ¶ *Ye would have plucked out your own eyes, &c.* No higher proof of attachment could have been given. They loved him so much, that they would have given to him *any* thing, however dear; they would have done *any* thing to contribute to his welfare. How changed, now that they had abandoned his doctrines, and yielded themselves to the guidance of those who taught a wholly different doctrine!

16. *Am I therefore become your enemy, &c.* Is my telling you the truth in regard to the tendency of the

own eyes, and have given them to me.

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

doctrines which you have embraced, and the character of those who have led you astray, and your own error, a proof that I have ceased to be your friend? How apt are we to feel that the man who tells us of our faults is our enemy! How apt are we to treat him coldly, and to "cut his acquaintance," and to regard him with dislike! The *reason* is, he gives us pain; and we cannot have pain given us, even by the stone against which we stumble, or by any of the brute creation, without momentary indignation, or regarding them for a time as our enemies. Besides, we do not like to have another person acquainted with our faults and our follies; and we naturally avoid the society of those who are thus acquainted with us. Such is human nature; and it requires no little grace for us to overcome this, and to regard the man who tells us of our faults, or the faults of our families, as our friend. We love to be flattered, and to have our friends flattered; and we shrink with pain from any exposure, or any necessity for repentance. Hence we become alienated from him who is faithful in reproving us for our faults. Hence men become offended with their ministers when they reprove them for their sins. Hence they become offended at the truth. Hence they resist the influences of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to bring the truth to the heart, and to reprove men for their sins. There is nothing more difficult than to regard with steady and unwavering affection the man who faithfully tells us the truth at all times, when that truth is painful. Yet he is our best friend. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful," Prov. xxvii. 6. If I am in danger of falling down a precipice, he shows to me the purest friendship who tells me of it; if I am in danger of breathing the air of the pestilence, and it can be avoided, he shows to me pure kind-

17 They zealously affect you, *but* <sup>a</sup> not well; yea, they would exclude <sup>1</sup> you, that ye might affect them.

<sup>a</sup> Ro.10.2.

1 or, us.

ness who tells me of it. So still more, if I am indulging in a course of conduct that may ruin me, or cherishing error that may endanger my salvation, he shows me the purest friendship who is most faithful in warning me, and apprising me of what must be the termination of my course.

17. *They zealously affect you*; see 1 Cor. xii. 31 (Gr.); xiv. 39. The word here used (Ζηλώω), means to be zealous towards, *i. e.*, for or against any person or thing; usually, in a good sense, to be eager for. Here it means, that the false teachers made a show of zeal towards the Galatians, or professed affection for them in order to gain them as their followers. They were full of ardour, and professed an extraordinary concern for their welfare—as men always do who are demagogues, or who seek to gain proselytes. The object of the apostle in this is, probably, to say, that it was not wholly owing to themselves that they had become alienated from the doctrines which he had taught. Great pains had been taken to do it; and there had been a show of zeal which would be likely to endanger any person. ¶ *But not well.* Not with good motives, or with good designs. ¶ *Yea, they would exclude you.* Marg. *Us.* A few printed editions of the New Testament have *ἡμᾶς*, *us*, instead of *ὑμᾶς*, *you*.—*Mill.* The word *exclude* here probably means, that they endeavoured to exclude the Galatians from the love and affection of Paul. They would shut them out from that, in order that they might secure them for their own purposes. If the reading in the margin, however, should be retained, the sense would be clearer. “They wish to exclude *us*, *i. e.*, me, the apostle, in order that they may have you wholly to themselves. If they can once get rid of your attachment to me, then they will have no difficulty in securing you for themselves.” This reading, says

18 *But it is good to be zealously affected always* <sup>b</sup> in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Co.15.58.

Rosenmüller, is found “in many of the best codices, and versions, and fathers.” It is adopted by Doddridge, Locke, and others. The main idea is clear: Paul stood in the way of their designs. The Galatians were truly attached to him, and it was necessary, in order to accomplish their ends, to withdraw their affections from him. When false teachers have designs on a people, they begin by alienating their confidence and affections from their pastors and teachers. They can hope for no success until this is done; and hence the efforts of errorists, and of infidels, and of scornors, is to undermine the confidence of a people in the ministry, and when this is done there is little difficulty in drawing them over to their own purposes. ¶ *That ye might affect them.* The same word as in the former part of the verse,—“that ye might zealously affect them”—*i. e.*, that ye might show ardent attachment to them. Their *first* work is to manifest *special interest* for your welfare; their *second*, to alienate you from him who had first preached the gospel to you; their *object*, not your salvation, or your real good, but to secure your zealous love for themselves.

18. *But it is good to be zealously affected.* The meaning of this is, “Understand me: I do not speak against zeal. I have not a word to say in its disparagement. In itself, it is good; and *their* zeal would be good if it were in a good cause.” Probably, they relied much on their zeal; perhaps they maintained, as errorists and deceivers are very apt to do, that *zeal* was sufficient evidence of the goodness of their cause, and that persons who are *so very zealous* could not possibly be bad men. How often is this plea set up by the friends of errorists and deceivers! ¶ *And not only when I am present with you.* It seems to me that there is great adroitness and great delicacy of irony in

19 My <sup>a</sup> little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

20 I desire to be present with

<sup>a</sup> 1 Co. 4. 15.

this remark; and that the apostle intends to remind them as gently as possible, that it would have been as well for them to have shown their zeal in a *good* cause when he was absent, as well as when he was with them. 'The sense may be, "You were exceedingly zealous in a good cause when I was with you. You loved the truth; you loved me. Since I left you, and as soon almost as I was out of your sight, your zeal died away, and your ardent love for me was transferred to others. Suffer me to remind you, that it would be well to be zealous of good when I am away, as well as when I am with you. There is not much true affection in that which dies away as soon as a man's back is turned." 'The doctrine is, that true zeal or love will live alike when the object is near and when it is removed; when our friends are present with us, and when they leave us; when their eye is upon us, and when it is turned away.

19. *My little children.* The language of tender affection, such as a parent would use towards his own offspring; see Note, 1 Cor. iv. 15; comp. Mat. xviii. 3; John xiii. 33; 1 John ii. 1, 12, 13; iv. 4; v. 21. The idea here is, that Paul felt that he sustained towards them the relation of a father, and he had for them the deep and tender feelings of a parent. ¶ *Of whom I travail in birth again.* For whose welfare I am deeply anxious: and for whom I endure deep anguish; comp. 1 Cor. iv. 15. His anxiety for them he compares to the deepest sufferings which human nature endures; and his language here is a striking illustration of what ministers of the gospel should feel, and do sometimes feel, in regard to their people. ¶ *Until Christ be formed in you.* The name *Christ* is often used to denote his religion, or the principles of his gospel; see Note on Rom. xiii. 14. Here it means, until Christ reigns wholly in your

you now, and to change my voice; for <sup>1</sup> I stand in doubt of you.

21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

<sup>1</sup> or, I am perplexed for you.

hearts; till you wholly and entirely embrace his doctrines; and till you become wholly imbued with his spirit; see Col. i. 27.

20. *I desire to be present with you now.* They had lost much by his absence; they had changed their views; they had in some measure become alienated from him; and he wishes that he might be again with them, as he was before. He would hope to accomplish much more by his personal presence than he could by letter. ¶ *And to change my voice.* That is, from complaint and censure, to tones of entire confidence. ¶ *For I stand in doubt of you.* Marg. "*I am perplexed for you.*" On the meaning of the word here used, see Note on 2 Cor. iv. 8. The sense is plain. Paul had much reason to doubt the sincerity and the solidity of their Christian principles, and he was deeply anxious on that account.

21. *Tell me, &c.* In order to show fully the nature and the effect of the law, Paul here introduces an illustration from an important fact in the Jewish history. This *allegory* has given great perplexity to expositors, and, in some respects, it is attended with real difficulty. An examination of the difficulties will be found in the larger commentaries. My object, without examining the expositions which have been proposed, will be to state, in as few words as possible, the simple meaning and design of the allegory. The *design* it is not difficult to understand. It is to show the effect of being under the bondage or servitude of the Jewish law, compared with the freedom which the gospel imparts. Paul had addressed the Galatians as having a real desire to be under bondage, or to be servants; Note on ver. 9. He had represented Christianity as a state of freedom, and Christians as the sons of God—not servants, but freemen. To show the difference of the two conditions, he appeals to two



22 For it is written, That Abraham had two sons; the one <sup>a</sup> by a bond-maid, the other <sup>b</sup> by a free woman.

<sup>a</sup> Ge. 16. 15.

<sup>b</sup> Ge. 21. 1, 2.

cases which would furnish a striking illustration of them. The one was the case of Hagar and her son. The effect of *bondage* was well illustrated there. She and her son were treated with severity, and were cast out and persecuted. This was a *fair illustration* of bondage under the law; of the servitude to the laws of Moses; and was a fit representation of Jerusalem as it was in the time of Paul. The other case was that of Isaac. He was the son of a free woman, and was treated accordingly. He was regarded as a son, not as a servant. And he was a *fair illustration* of the case of those who were made free by the gospel. They enjoyed a similar freedom and sonship, and should not seek a state of servitude or bondage. The condition of Isaac was a fit illustration of the New Jerusalem; the heavenly city; the true kingdom of God. But Paul does not mean to say, as I suppose, that the history of the son of Hagar and of the son of Rebecca was *mere* allegory, or that the narrative by Moses was *designed* to represent the different condition of those who were under the law and under the gospel. He uses it simply, as *showing the difference between servitude and freedom, and as a striking illustration of the nature of the bondage to the Jewish law, and of the freedom of the gospel*, just as any one may use a striking historical fact to illustrate a principle. These general remarks will constitute the *basis* of my interpretation of this celebrated allegory. The expression "tell me," is one of affectionate remonstrance and reasoning; see Luke vii. 42, "Tell me, therefore, which of these will love him most?" Comp. Isa. i. 18, "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." ¶ *Ye that desire to be under the law*; Note, ver. 9. You who wish to yield obedience to the laws of Moses. You who maintain that conformity to those laws is neces-

23 But he *who was* of the <sup>c</sup> bond-woman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman *was* by promise.

<sup>c</sup> Ro. 9. 7, 8.

sary to justification. ¶ *Do ye not hear the law?* Do you not understand what the law says? Will you not listen to its own admonitions, and the instruction which may be derived from the law on the subject? The word "law" here refers not to the commands that were uttered on mount Sinai, but to the *book* of the law. The passage to which reference is made is in the Book of Genesis; but all the five books of Moses were by the Jews classed under the general name of the law; see Note on Luke xxiv. 44. The sense is, "Will you not listen to a narrative found in one of the books of the law itself, fully illustrating the nature of that servitude which you wish?"

22. *For it is written*; Gen. xvi. xxi. ¶ *Abraham had two sons*. Ishmael and Isaac. Abraham subsequently had several sons by Keturah after the death of Sarah; Gen. xxvi. 1—6. But the two sons by Hagar and Sarah were the most prominent, and the events of their lives furnished the particular illustration which Paul desired. ¶ *The one by a bond-maid*. Ishmael, the son of Hagar. Hagar was an Egyptian slave, whom Sarah gave to Abraham in order that he might not be wholly without posterity; Gen. xvi. 3. ¶ *The other by a free woman*. Isaac, the son of Sarah; Gen. xxi. 1, 2.

23. *But he who was of the bond-woman was born after the flesh*. In the ordinary course of nature, without any special promise, or any unusual divine interposition, as in the case of Isaac. ¶ *But he of the free woman, &c.* The birth of Isaac was in accordance with a special promise, and by a remarkable divine interposition; see Gen. xviii. 10; xxi. 1, 2; Heb. xi. 11, 12; comp. Notes on Rom. iv. 19—21. The idea here of Paul is, that the son of the slave was in a humble and inferior condition from his very birth. There was no special promise

24 Which things are an allegory: <sup>a</sup> for these are the two covenants; the one from the

mount <sup>2</sup> Sinai, <sup>b</sup> which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Co. 10. 11.

<sup>1</sup> or, testaments.

<sup>2</sup> Sina.

<sup>b</sup> De. 33. 2.

attending him. He was *born* into a state of inferiority and servitude which attended him through his whole life. Isaac, however, was met with promises as soon as he was born, and was under the benefit of those promises as long as he lived. The *object* of Paul is, to state the truth in regard to a condition of servitude and slavery. It is attended with evils from beginning to end; from the birth to the grave. By this illustration he means to show them the folly of becoming the voluntary slaves of the law after they had once been made free.

24. *Which things.* The different accounts of Ishmael and Isaac. ¶ *Are an allegory.* May be regarded allegorically, or as illustrating great principles in regard to the condition of slaves and freemen; and may therefore be used to illustrate the effect of servitude to the law of Moses compared with the freedom of the gospel. He does not mean to say that the historical record of Moses was not true, or was merely allegorical; nor does he mean to say that Moses *meant* this to be an allegory, or that he *intended* that it should be applied to the exact purpose to which Paul applied it. No such design is apparent in the narrative of Moses, and it is evident that he had no such intention. Nor can it be shown that Paul means to be understood as saying that Moses had any such design, or that his account was not a record of a plain historical fact. Paul uses it as he would any other historical fact that would illustrate the same principle, and he makes no more use of it than the Saviour did in his parables of real or fictitious narratives to illustrate an important truth, or than we always do of real history to illustrate an important principle. The word which is here used by Paul (*ἀλληγορίαι*) is derived from *ἄλλος*, another, and *ἀγορεύω*, to speak, to speak openly or in public.—*Passow.* It properly means to speak any thing otherwise than it is understood (*Passow*); to speak allegori-

cally; to allegorize. The word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, nor is it found in the Septuagint, though it occurs often in the classic writers. An allegory is a continued metaphor; see Blair's Lectures, xv. It is a figurative sentence or discourse, in which the principal object is described by another subject resembling it in its properties and circumstances.—*Webster.* Allegories are in words what hieroglyphics are in painting. The distinction between a *parable* and an *allegory* is said to be, that a parable is a *supposed* history to illustrate some important truth, as the parable of the good Samaritan, &c.; an allegory is based on *real facts*. It is not probable, however, that this distinction is always carefully observed. Sometimes the allegory is based on the resemblance to some inanimate object, as in the beautiful allegory in the eightieth psalm. Allegories, parables, and metaphors abound in the writings of the East. Truth was more easily treasured up in this way, and could be better preserved and transmitted when it was connected with an interesting story. The lively fancy of the people of the East also led them to this mode of communicating truth; though a love for it is probably founded in human nature. The best sustained allegory of any considerable length in the world is, doubtless, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*; and yet this is among the most popular of all books. The ancient Jews were exceedingly fond of allegories, and even turned a considerable part of the Old Testament into allegory. The ancient Greek philosophers also were fond of this mode of teaching. Pythagoras instructed his followers in this manner, and this was common among the Greeks, and was imitated much by the early Christians.—*Calmet.* Many of the Christian fathers, of the school of Origen, made the Old Testament almost wholly allegorical, and found mysteries in the plainest narratives. The Bible became thus with them a

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and <sup>1</sup> answereth to

Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

1 or, is in the same rank with.

book of enigmas, and exegesis consisted in an ingenious and fanciful accommodation of all the narratives in the scriptures to events in subsequent times. The most fanciful, and the most ingenious man, on this principle, was the best interpreter; and as any man might attach any hidden mystery which he chose to the scriptures, they became wholly useless as an infallible guide. Better principles of interpretation now prevail; and the great truth has gone forth, never more to be recalled, that the Bible is to be interpreted on the same principle as all other books; that its language is to be investigated by the same laws as language in all other books; and that no more liberty is to be taken in allegorizing the scriptures than may be taken with Herodotus or Livy. It is lawful to use narratives of real events to illustrate important principles always. Such a use is often made of history; and such a use, I suppose, the apostle Paul makes here of an important fact in the history of the Old Testament. ¶ *For these are.* These may be used to represent the two covenants. The apostle *could not* mean that the sons of Sarah and Hagar were *literally* the two covenants; for this could not be true, and the declaration would be unintelligible. In what sense could Ishmael be called a *covenantant*? The meaning, therefore, must be, that they furnished an apt illustration or representation of the two covenants; they would show what the nature of the two covenants was. The words "are" and "is" are often used in this sense in the Bible, to denote that one thing *represents* another. Thus in the institution of the Lord's supper; "Take, eat, this is my body" (Matt. xxvi. 26); *i. e.*, this *represents* my body. The bread was not the living body that was then before them. So in ver. 28. "This is my blood of the new covenant;" *i. e.*, this represents my blood. The wine in the cup *could not* be the living blood of the Redeemer that was then flowing in his

veins; see Note on that place; comp Gen. xli. 26. ¶ *The two covenants* Marg. *Testaments*. The word means here, covenants or compacts; see Note on 1 Cor. xi. 25. The two covenants here referred to, are the one on mount Sinai made with the Jews, and the other that which is made with the people of God in the gospel. The one resembles the condition of bondage in which Hagar and her son were; the other the condition of freedom in which Sarah and Isaac were. ¶ *The one from the mount Sinai.* Marg. *Sina*. The Greek is *Sina*, though the word may be written either way. ¶ *Which gendereth to bondage.* Which tends to produce bondage or servitude. That is, the laws are stern and severe; and the observance of them costly, and onerous like a state of bondage; see Note on Acts xv. 10. ¶ *Which is Agar.* Which Hagar would appropriately represent. The condition of servitude produced by the law had a strong resemblance to her condition as a slave.

25. *For this Agar is mount Sinai.* This Hagar well represents the law given on mount Sinai. No one can believe that Paul meant to say that Hagar was *literally* mount Sinai. A great deal of perplexity has been felt in regard to this passage, and Bentley proposed to cancel it altogether as an interpolation. But there is no good authority for this. Several MSS. and versions read it, "For this Sinai is a mountain in Arabia;" others, "to this Hagar Jerusalem answereth," &c. Griesbach has placed these readings in the margin, and has marked them as not to be rejected as certainly false, but as worthy of a more attentive examination; as sustained by some plausible arguments, though not in the whole satisfactory. The word Hagar in Arabic is said to signify *a rock*; and it has been supposed that the name was appropriately given to mount Sinai, because it was a pile of rocks, and that Paul had allusion to this meaning of the word here. So

26 But Jerusalem <sup>a</sup> which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

<sup>a</sup> He.12.22; Re.21.2,10.

Chandler, Rosenmüller, and others interpret it. But I cannot find in Castoll or Gesenius that the word Hagar in Arabic has this signification; still less is there evidence that the name was ever given to mount Sinai by the Arabs, or that such a signification was known to Paul. The plainest and most obvious sense of a passage is generally the true sense; and the obvious sense here is, that Hagar was a *fair representation* of mount Sinai, and of the law given there. ¶ *In Arabia.* Mount Sinai is situated in Arabia Petræa, or the Rocky. Rosenmüller says that this means "in the Arabic language;" but probably in this interpretation he stands alone. ¶ *And answereth to Jerusalem.* Marg. *Is in the same rank with.* The margin is the better translation. The meaning is, it is just like it, or corresponds with it. Jerusalem as it is now (*i. e.*, in the days of Paul), is like mount Sinai. It is subject to laws, and rites, and customs; bound by a state of servitude, and fear, and trembling, such as existed when the law was given on mount Sinai. There is no freedom; there are no great and liberal views; there is none of the liberty which the gospel imparts to men. The word *ἀνταποκρίνεται*, *answereth to*, means properly to advance in order together; to go together with, as soldiers march along in the same rank; and then to correspond to. It means here that mount Sinai and Jerusalem as it then was would be fitted to *march together* in the same platoon or rank. In marshalling an army, care is taken to place soldiers of the same height, and size, and skill, and courage, if possible, together. So here it means that they were *alike*. Both were connected with bondage, like Hagar. On the one, a law was given that led to bondage; and the other was in fact under a miserable servitude of rites and forms. ¶ *Which now is.* As it exists now; that is, a *slave* to rites

27 For it is written, <sup>b</sup> Rejoice thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest

<sup>b</sup> Isa.54.1.

and forms, as it was in fact in the time of Paul. ¶ *And is in bondage.* To laws and customs. She was under hard and oppressive rites, like slavery. She was also in bondage to sin (John viii. 33, 34); but this does not seem to be the idea here. ¶ *With her children.* Her inhabitants. She is represented as a mother, and her inhabitants, the Jews, are in the condition of the son of Hagar. On this passage comp. Notes on 1 Cor. x. 4, for a more full illustration of the principles involved here.

26. *But Jerusalem which is above.* The spiritual Jerusalem; the true church of God. Jerusalem was the place where God was worshipped, and hence it became synonymous with the word *church*, or is used to represent the people of God. The word rendered "above," (*ἄνω*) means properly *up above*, that which is above; and hence heavenly, celestial; Col. iii. 1, 2; John viii. 23. Here it means the heavenly or celestial Jerusalem; Rev. xxi. 2, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven." Heb. xii. 22, "Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Here it is used to denote the church, as being of heavenly origin. ¶ *Is free.* The spirit of the gospel is that of freedom. It is freedom from sin, freedom from the bondage of rites and customs, and it tends to promote universal freedom; see Note on ver. 7; comp. John viii. 32, 36; Note, 2 Cor. iii. 17. ¶ *Which is the mother of us all.* Of all who are true Christians, whether we are by birth Jews or Gentiles. We should not, therefore, yield ourselves to any degrading and debasing servitude of any kind; comp. Note, 1 Cor. vi. 12.

27. *For it is written.* This passage is found in Isa. liv. 1. For an exposition of its meaning as it occurs there, see my Notes on Isaiah. The object of the apostle in introducing it here seems to be to prove that the

not; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

<sup>a</sup> Ac. 3.25, chap. 3.29.

Gentiles as well as the Jews would partake of the privileges connected with the heavenly Jerusalem. He had in the previous verse spoken of the Jerusalem from above as the common mother of ALL true Christians, whether by birth Jews or Gentiles. This might be disputed or doubted by the Jews; and he therefore adduces this proof from the Old Testament. Or if it was not doubted, still the quotation was pertinent, and would illustrate the sentiment which he had just uttered. The mention of Jerusalem as a *mother* seems to have suggested this text. Isaiah had spoken of Jerusalem as a female that had been long desolate and childless, now rejoicing by a large accession from the Gentile world, and increased in numbers like a female who should have more children than one who had been long married. To this Paul appropriately refers when he says that the whole church, Jews and Gentiles, were the children of the heavenly Jerusalem, represented here as a rejoicing mother. He has not quoted literally from the Hebrew, but he has used the Septuagint version, and has retained the sense. The sense is, that the accession from the Gentile world would be far more numerous than the Jewish people had ever been; a prophecy that has been already fulfilled. ¶ *Rejoice thou barren that bearest not.* As a woman who has had no children would rejoice. This represents probably the heathen world as having been apparently forsaken and abandoned, and with whom there had been none of the true children of God. ¶ *Break forth and cry.* Or "break forth and exclaim;" *i. e.* break out into loud and glad exclamations at the remarkable accession. The *cry* here referred to was to be a *joyful* cry or shout; the language of exultation. So the Hebrew word in Isa. liv. 1 (צִהֵל) means. ¶ *For the desolate.* She who was desolate and apparently forsaken. It literally re-

28 Now we, <sup>a</sup> brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

29 But as then he <sup>b</sup> that was

<sup>b</sup> Ge. 21.9.

fers to a woman who had seemed to be desolate and forsaken, who was unmarried. In Isaiah it may refer to Jerusalem, long forsaken and desolate, or as some suppose to the Gentile world; see my Note on Isa. liv. 1. ¶ *Than she which hath an husband.* Perhaps referring to the Jewish people as in covenant with God, and often spoken of as *married* to him; Isa. lxiii. 4, 5; liv. 5.

28. *Now we, brethren.* We who are Christians. ¶ *Are the children of the promise.* We so far resemble Isaac, that there are great and precious promises made to us. We are not in the condition of Ishmael, to whom no promise was made.

29. *But as then he that was born after the flesh.* Ishmael; see ver. 23. ¶ *Persecuted him that was born after the Spirit.* That is, Isaac. The phrase, "after the Spirit," here, is synonymous with "according to the promise" in the previous verse. It stands opposed to the phrase "after the flesh," and means that his birth was by the special or miraculous agency of God; see Rom. iv. It was not in the ordinary course of events. The *persecution* here referred to, was the injurious treatment which Isaac received from Ishmael, or the opposition which subsisted between them. The *particular* reference of Paul is doubtless to Gen. xxi. 9, where it is said that "Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking." It was on account of this, and at the special request of Sarah, that Hagar and her son were expelled from the house of Abraham; Gen. xxi. 10. ¶ *Even so it is now.* That is, Christians, the children of the promise, are persecuted by the Jews, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "as it now is," and who are uninterested in the promises, as Ishmael was. For an illustration of this, see Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, on this Epistle, No. V. Dr. Paley has remarked that it does not appear that

born after the flesh, persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so, <sup>a</sup> *it is now*.

30 Nevertheless, what saith <sup>b</sup> the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of

the apostle Paul was ever set upon by the Gentiles, unless they were first stirred up by the Jews, except in two instances. One of these was at Philippi, after the cure of the Pythoness (Acts xvi. 19); and the other at Ephesus, at the instance of Demetrius; Acts xix. 24. The persecutions of the Christians arose, therefore, mainly from the Jews, from those who were in bondage to the law, and to rites and customs; and Paul's allusion here to the case of the persecution which Isaac the free-born son endured, is exceedingly pertinent and happy.

30. *Nevertheless.* But (ἀλλὰ). ¶ *What saith the Scripture?* What does the Scripture teach on the subject? What lesson does it convey in regard to the bondman? ¶ *Cast out the bondwoman and her son.* This was the language of Sarah, in an address to Abraham, requesting him to cast out Hagar and Ishmael; Gen. xxi. 10. That was done. Paul uses it here as applicable to the case before him. As used by him the meaning is, that every thing like servitude in the gospel is to be rejected, as Hagar and Ishmael were driven away. It does not mean, as it seems to me, that they were to expel the Jewish teachers in Galatia, but that they were to reject every thing like servitude and bondage; they were to adhere only to that which was free. Paul cannot here mean that the passage in Gen. xxi. 10, originally had reference to the gospel, for nothing evidently was farther from the mind of Sarah than any such reference; nor can it be shown that he meant to approve of or vindicate the conduct of Sarah; but he finds a passage applicable to his purpose, and he conveys his ideas in that language as exactly expressing his meaning. We all use language in that way wherever we find it.

[Yet God confirmed the sentence of Sarah; Gen. xxi. 12. Hence Mr. Scott thus para-

the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.

<sup>a</sup> John 15.19.

<sup>b</sup> Ge. 21.10, 12.

phrases, "But as the Galatians might read in the Scriptures that God himself had commanded Hagar and Ishmael to be sent away from Abraham's family, that the son of the bondwoman might not share the inheritance with Isaac; even so the Jewish nation would soon be cast out of the church, and all who continued under the legal covenant excluded from heaven."]

31. *So then, brethren.* It follows from all this. Not from the allegory regarded as an argument—for Paul does not use it thus—but from the considerations suggested on the whole subject. Since the Christian religion is so superior to the Jewish; since we are by it freed from degrading servitude, and are not in bondage to rites and ceremonies; since it was designed to make us truly free, and since by that religion we are admitted to the privileges of sons, and are no longer under laws, and tutors, and governors, as if we were minors; from all this it follows, that we should feel and act, not as if we were children of a bondwoman, and born in slavery, but as if we were children of a free-woman, and born to liberty. It is the birthright of Christians to think, and feel, and act like freemen, and they should not allow themselves to become the slaves of customs, and rites, and ceremonies, but should feel that they are the adopted children of God.

Thus closes this celebrated allegory—an allegory that has greatly perplexed most expositors, and most readers of the Bible. In view of it, and of the exposition above, there are a few remarks which may not inappropriately be made.

(1.) It is by no means affirmed, that the history of Hagar and Sarah in Genesis, had any original reference to the gospel. The account there is a plain historical narrative, not designed to have any such reference.

(2.) The narrative contains important principles, that may be used as illustrating truth, and is so used by the apostle Paul. There are parallel

points between the history and the truths of religion, where the one may be *illustrated* by the other.

(3.) The apostle does not use it at all in the way of *argument*, or as if that *proved* that the Galatians were not to submit to the Jewish rites and customs. It is an illustration of the comparative nature of servitude and freedom, and would, therefore, illustrate the difference between a servile compliance with Jewish rites, and the freedom of the gospel.

(4.) This use of an historical fact by the apostle does not make it proper for us to turn the Old Testament into allegory, or even to make a very free use of this mode of illustrating truth. That an allegory may be used sometimes with advantage, no one can doubt while the "Pilgrim's Progress" shall exist. Nor can any one doubt that Paul has here derived, in this manner, an important and striking illustration of truth from the Old Testament. But no one acquainted with the history of interpretation can doubt that vast injury has been done by a fanciful mode of explaining the Old Testament; by making every fact in its history an allegory; and every pin and pillar of the tabernacle and the temple a *type*. Nothing is better fitted to bring the whole science of interpretation into contempt; nothing more dishonours the Bible, than to make it a book of enigmas, and religion to consist in puerile conceits. The Bible is a book of sense; and all the doctrines essential to salvation are plainly revealed. It should be interpreted, not by mere conceit and by fancy, but by the sober laws according to which are interpreted other books. It should be explained, not under the influence of a vivid imagination, but under the influence of a heart imbued with a love of truth, and by an understanding disciplined to investigate the meaning of words and phrases, and capable of rendering a *reason* for the interpretation which is proposed. Men may abundantly use the facts in the Old Testament to illustrate human nature, as Paul did; but far distant be the day, when the principles of Origen

and of Cocceius shall again prevail, and when it shall be assumed, that "the Bible means every thing that it can be made to mean."

[These are excellent remarks, and the caution which the author gives against extravagant and imaginative systems of interpreting scripture cannot be too often repeated. It is allowed, however, nearly on all hands, that this allegory is brought forward by way of *illustration* only, and not of *argument*. This being the case, the question, as to whether the history in Genesis were *originally* intended to represent the matter, to which Paul here applies it, is certainly not of very great importance, notwithstanding the learned labour that has been expended on it, and to such an extent as to justify the critic's remark, "*vexavit interpretes vehementer vexatus ab his et ipse.*" Whatever be the original design of the passage, the apostle *has* employed it as an illustration of his subject, and was guided by the Spirit of inspiration in so doing. But certainly we should not be very far wrong, if since an apostle has *affirmed* such spiritual representation, we should suppose it *originally* intended by the Spirit; nor are we in great danger of making types of every pin and pillar, so long as we *strictly* confine ourselves to the admission of such only as rest upon apostolic authority. "This transaction," says the eminently judicious Thomas Scott, "was so remarkable, the coincidence so exact, and the illustration so instructive, that we cannot doubt it *originally* was intended, by the Holy Spirit, as an allegory and type of those things to which the inspired apostle referred it."]

## CHAPTER V.

### ANALYSIS.

This chapter is properly a continuation of the argument in the previous chapter, and is designed to induce the Galatians to renounce their conformity to the Jewish law, and to become entirely conformed to the gospel. In particular, it seems to be designed to meet a charge that had been brought against him, that he had preached the necessity of circumcision, or that he had so practised it as to show that he believed that it was obligatory on others. Under his example, or pleading his authority, it seems the false teachers there had urged the necessity of its observance; see ver. 11. The argument and the exhortation consist of the following parts.

I. He exhorts them to stand firm in the liberty of Christianity, and not to be brought again under bondage; ver. 1.

II. He solemnly assures them, that if they depended on circumcision for salvation, they could derive no benefit from Christ. They put themselves into a perfect legal state, and must

## CHAPTER V.

**STAND** <sup>a</sup> fast therefore in the  
<sup>b</sup> liberty wherewith Christ

<sup>a</sup> Ep. 6. 14.

<sup>b</sup> John 8. 32, 36; Ro. 6. 18; Ac. 15. 10.

depend on that alone; and that was equivalent to renouncing Christ altogether, or to falling from grace; ver. 2—6.

III. He assures them that their present belief could not have come from him by whom they were originally brought to the knowledge of the truth; but must have been from some foreign influence, operating like leaven; ver. 7—9.

IV. He says he had confidence in them, on the whole, that they would obey the truth, and that they would suffer him who had troubled them to bear his proper judgment, gently insinuating that he should be disowned or cut off; ver. 10, 12.

V. He vindicates himself from the charge that he preached the necessity of circumcision. His vindication was, that if he had done that, he would have escaped persecution, for then the offence of the cross would have ceased; ver. 11.

VI. He assures them that they had been called unto liberty; that the gospel had made them free. Yet Paul felt how easy it was to abuse this doctrine, and to pretend that Christ had freed them from *all* restraint, and from the bondage of *all* law. Against this he cautions them. Their liberty was not licentiousness. It was not freedom from all the restraints of the law. It was not that they might give indulgence to the passions of the flesh. It was designed that they should serve one another; and not fall into the indulgence of raging passions, producing strife and mutual hatred; ver. 13—15.

VII. To illustrate this, and to show them the evils of giving indulgence to their appetites under the pretence that they were *free*, he proceeds to show what *were* the passions to which carnal indulgence would give rise, or what were the works of the flesh; ver. 16—21.

VIII. On the other hand, the Spirit produces a train of most lovely vir-

hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you,

tues, feelings, and affections, against which there could be no law; v. 22, 23.

IX. They who were Christians had in fact crucified the flesh. They were bound to live after the teachings of the Spirit, and Paul, therefore, exhorts them to lay aside all vain-glory and envy, and to live in peace; ver. 24—26.

1. *Stand fast, therefore.* Be firm and unwavering. This verse properly belongs to the previous chapter, and should not have been separated from it. The sense is, that they were to be firm and unyielding in maintaining the great principles of Christian liberty. They had been freed from the bondage of rites and ceremonies; and they should by no means, and in no form, yield to them again. ¶ *In the liberty, &c.*; comp. John viii. 32, 36; Rom. vi. 18; Notes, chap. iv. 3—5. ¶ *And be not entangled again.* Tindal renders this, “And wrap not yourselves again.” The sense is, do not again allow such a yoke to be put on you; do not again become slaves to any rites, and customs, and habits. ¶ *The yoke of bondage.* Of servitude to the Jewish laws; see Note, Acts xv. 10.

2. *Behold, I Paul say unto you.* I, who at first preached the gospel to you; I, too, who have been circumcised, and who was formerly a strenuous assertor of the necessity of observing the laws of Moses; and I, too, who am charged (see ver. 11) with still preaching the necessity of circumcision, now solemnly say to you, that if you are circumcised with a view to being justified by that in whole or in part, it amounts to a rejection of the doctrine of justification by Christ, and an entire apostacy from him. He is to be “a whole Saviour.” No one is to share with him in the honour of saving men; and no rite, no custom, no observance of law, is to divide the honour with his death. The design of Paul is to give them the most solemn assurance on this point; and



that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3 For I testify again to every

by his own authority and experience to guard them from the danger, and to put the matter to rest. ¶ *That if ye be circumcised.* This must be understood with reference to the subject under consideration. If you are circumcised with such a view as is maintained by the false teachers that have come among you; that is, with an idea that it is necessary in order to your justification. He evidently did not mean that if any of them *had* been circumcised before their conversion to Christianity; nor could he mean to say, that circumcision in all cases amounted to a rejection of Christianity, for he had himself procured the circumcision of Timothy, Acts xvi. 3. If it was done, as it was then, for prudential considerations, and with a wish not necessarily to irritate the Jews, and to give one a more ready access to them, it was not to be regarded as wrong. But if, as the false teachers in Galatia claimed, as a thing *essential* to salvation, as *indispensable* to justification and acceptance with God, then the matter assumed a different aspect; and then it became in fact a renouncing of Christ as *himself sufficient* to save us. So with any thing else. Rites and ceremonies in religion may be in themselves well enough, if they are *held* to be matters not essential; but the moment they are regarded as vital and essential, that moment they begin to infringe on the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and that moment they are to be rejected; and it is because of the danger that this *will* be the case, that they are to be used sparingly in the Christian church. Who does not know the danger of depending upon prayers, and alms, and the sacraments, and extreme unction, and penance, and empty forms for salvation? And who does not know how much in the papal communion the great doctrine of justification has been obscured by numberless such rites and forms? ¶ *Christ shall profit you nothing.* Will be of no advantage to

man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 Christ is become of no ef-

you. Your dependence on circumcision, in these circumstances, will in fact amount to a rejection of the Saviour, and of the doctrine of justification by him.

3. *For I testify again.* Probably he had stated this when he had preached the gospel to them first, and he now solemnly bears witness to the same thing *again*. Bloomfield, however, supposes that the word *again* here (*παλιν*) means, on the other hand, or, *furthermore*, or, as we would say, "and again." ¶ *That he is a debtor to do the whole law.* He binds himself to obey all the law of Moses. Circumcision was the distinguishing badge of the Jews, as baptism is of Christians. A man, therefore, who became circumcised became a *professor of the Jewish religion*, and bound himself to obey all its peculiar laws. This must be understood, of course, with reference to the point under discussion; and means, if he did it with a view to justification, or as a thing that was necessary and binding. It would not apply to such a case as that of Timothy, where it was a matter of mere expediency or prudence; see Note on ver. 2.

4. *Christ is become of no effect unto you.* You will derive no advantage from Christ. His work in regard to you is needless and vain. If you can be justified in any other way than by him, then of course you do not need him, and your adoption of the other mode is in fact a renunciation of him. Tindal renders this, "Ye are gone quite from Christ." The word here used (*παρρησιω*), means properly, to render inactive, idle, useless; to do away, to put an end to; and here it means that they had withdrawn from Christ, if they attempted to be justified by the law. They would not need him if they could be thus justified; and they could derive no benefit from him. A man who can be justified by his own obedience, does not need the aid or the merit of another; and if it was true, as they seemed to suppose,

fect <sup>a</sup> unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law : ye are fallen <sup>b</sup> from grace.

5 For we through the Spirit wait <sup>c</sup>

that they could be justified by the law, it followed that the work of Christ was in vain so far as they were concerned. ¶ *Whosoever of you are justified by the law.* On the supposition that any of you are justified by the law; or if, as you seem to suppose, any are justified by the law. The apostle does not say that this had in fact ever occurred; but he merely makes a supposition. If such a thing should or could occur, it would follow that you had fallen from grace. ¶ *Ye are fallen from grace.* That is, this would amount to apostasy from the religion of the Redeemer, and would be in fact a rejection of the grace of the gospel. That this had ever in fact occurred among true Christians the apostle does not affirm *unless* he affirmed that men can in fact be justified by the law, since he makes the falling from grace a consequence of that. But did Paul mean to teach that? Did he mean to affirm that any man in fact had been, or could be justified by his own obedience to the law? Let his own writings answer; see, especially, Rom. iii. 20. But unless he held that, then this passage does not prove that any one who has ever been a true Christian has fallen away. The fair interpretation of the passage does not demand that. Its simple and obvious meaning is, that if a man who has been a professed Christian *should be* justified by his own conformity to the law, and adopt that mode of justification, then that would amount to a rejection of the mode of salvation by Christ, and would be a renouncing of the plan of justification by grace. The two systems cannot be united. The adoption of the one is, in fact, a rejection of the other. Christ will be "a whole Saviour," or none. This passage, therefore, *cannot* be adduced to prove that any true Christian has in fact fallen away from grace, unless it proves also that man may be justified by the deeds of the law, contrary to the repeated de-

for the hope of righteousness <sup>d</sup> by faith.

6 For in Jesus Christ neither  
a Ro. 9.31.32.      b He. 12.15.      c Ro. 8.25  
d 2Ti. 4.8.

clarations of Paul himself. The word "grace" here, does not mean grace in the sense of *personal religion*, it means the *system* of salvation by grace, in contradistinction from that by merit or by works—the system of the gospel.

5. *For we.* We who are Christians. It is a characteristic of the true Christian. ¶ *Through the Spirit.* The Holy Spirit. We expect salvation only by his aid. ¶ *Wait for.* That is, we *expect* salvation in this way. The main idea is, not that of *waiting* as if the thing were *delayed*; it is that of *expecting*. The sense is, that true Christians have no other hope of salvation than by faith in the Lord Jesus. It is not by their own works, nor is it by any conformity to the law. The object of Paul is, to show them the true nature of the Christian hope of eternal life, and to recall them from dependence on their conformity to the law. ¶ *The hope of righteousness.* The hope of justification. They had no other hope of justification than by faith in the Redeemer; see Note on Rom. i. 17.

6. *For in Jesus Christ.* In the religion which Christ came to establish. ¶ *Neither circumcision, &c.* It makes no difference whether a man is circumcised or not. He is not saved *because* he is circumcised, nor is he condemned *because* he is not. The design of Christianity is to abolish these rites and ceremonies, and to introduce a way of salvation that shall be applicable to all mankind alike; see Notes on ch. iii. 28; 1 Cor. vii. 19; comp. Rom. ii. 29. ¶ *But faith which worketh by love.* Faith that evinces its existence by love to God, and benevolence to men. It is not a mere *intellectual* belief, but it is that which reaches the heart, and controls the affections. It is not a *dead* faith, but it is that which is operative, and which is seen in Christian kindness and affection. It is not mere belief of the truth, or mere *orthodoxy*, but it is that which produces true at-

"circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which <sup>b</sup> worketh by love.

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?

a 1 Co. 7.19. b 1 Ti. 1.3; Jn. 2.18—22.

tachment to others. A mere intellectual assent to the truth may leave the heart cold and unaffected; mere orthodoxy, however bold and self-confident, and "sound," may not be inconsistent with contentions, and strifes, and logomachies, and divisions. The true faith is that which is seen in benevolence, in love to God, in love to all who bear the Christian name; in a readiness to do good to all mankind. This shows that the *heart* is affected by the faith that is held; and this is the nature and design of all genuine religion. Tindal renders this, "faith, which by love is mighty in operation."

7. *Ye did run well.* The Christian life is often represented as a race; see Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 24—26. Paul means here, that they began the Christian life with ardour and zeal; comp. chap. iv. 15. ¶ *Who did hinder you.* Marg. *Drive you back.* The word used here (*αναίστηται*) means properly to beat or drive back. Hence it means to hinder, check, or retard. Dr. Doddridge remarks that this is "an Olympic expression, and properly signifies *coming across the course* while a person is running in it, in such a manner as to *jostle*, and throw him out of the way." Paul asks, with emphasis, who it could have been that retarded them in their Christian course, implying that it could have been done only by their own consent, or that there was really no cause why they should not have continued as they began. ¶ *That ye should not obey the truth.* The true system of justification by faith in the Redeemer. That you should have turned aside, and embraced the dangerous errors in regard to the necessity of obeying the laws of Moses.

8. *This persuasion.* This belief that it is necessary to obey the laws of Moses, and to intermingle the observ-

8 This persuasion *cometh* not or him that calleth you.

9 A little <sup>c</sup> leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will

1 or, drive you back. c Mat. 13.33; 1 Co. 5.6.

ance of Jewish rites with the belief of the Christian doctrines in order to be saved. ¶ *Not of him that calleth you.* That is, of God, who had called them into his kingdom. That it refers to God and not to Paul is plain. They knew well enough that Paul had not persuaded them to it, and it was important now to show them that it could not be traced to God, though they who taught it pretended to be commissioned by him.

9. *A little leaven, &c.* This is evidently a proverbial expression; see it explained in the Notes on 1 Cor. v. 6. Its meaning here is, that the embracing of the errors which they had adopted was to be traced to some influence existing among themselves, and acting like leaven. It may either mean that there was existing among them from the first a slight *tendency* to conform to rites and customs, and that this had now like leaven pervaded the mass; or it may mean that the false teachers there might be compared to leaven, whose doctrines, though *they* were few in number, had pervaded the mass of Christians; or it may mean, as many have supposed, that *any* conformity to the Jewish law was like leaven. If they practised circumcision, it would not stop there. The tendency to conform to Jewish rites would spread from that until it would infect all the doctrines of religion, and they would fall into the observance of *all* the rites of the Jewish law. It seems to me that the *second* interpretation referred to above is the correct one; and that the apostle means to say, that the influence which had brought this change about was at first small and unimportant; that there might have been but a few teachers of that kind, and it might have not been deemed worthy of particular attention or alarm; but that the doctrines thus infused into the churches,

be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his <sup>a</sup> judgment, whosoever he be.

11 And I, brethren, if I yet

<sup>a</sup> 2 Co. 10.6.

had spread like leaven, until the whole mass had become affected.

10. *I have confidence in you, &c.* Though they had been led astray, and had embraced many false opinions, yet, on the whole, Paul had confidence in their piety, and believed they would yet return and embrace the truth.

¶ *That ye will be none otherwise minded.* That is, than you have been taught by me; or than I think and teach on the subject. Paul doubtless means to say, that he had full confidence that they would embrace the views which he was inculcating on the subject of justification, and he makes this remark in order to modify the severity of his tone of reprehension, and to show that, notwithstanding all he had said, he had confidence still in their piety. He believed that they would condescend with him in his opinion, alike on the general subject of justification, and in regard to the cause of their alienation from the truth. He, therefore, gently insinuates that it was not to be traced to themselves that they had departed from the truth, but to the "little leaven" that had leavened the mass; and he adds, that whoever had done this, should be held to be responsible for it. ¶ *But he that troubleth you.* By leading you into error. ¶ *Shall bear his judgment.* Shall be responsible for it, and will receive proper treatment from you. He gently states this general principle, which is so obvious; states that he does not believe that the defection is to be traced to themselves; and designs to prepare their minds for a proposition which he intends to submit (ver. 12), that the offending person or persons should be disowned and cut off. ¶ *Whosoever he be.* "I do not know who he is. I mention no names; accuse no one by name; and advise no severe measures against any particular individual. I state only the obvious principle that every man should bear his own burden, and be

preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?<sup>b</sup> then is the offence<sup>c</sup> of the cross ceased.

<sup>b</sup> chap. 6. 12.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Co. 1. 23.

held responsible for what he has done — no matter who he is."

11. *And I, brethren.* Paul here proceeds to vindicate himself from giving countenance to the doctrines which they had advanced there. It is evident that the false teachers in Galatia appealed to Paul himself, and alleged that he insisted on the necessity of circumcision, and that they were teaching no more than he taught. On what they founded this is unknown. It may have been mere slander; or it may have arisen from the fact that he had circumcised Timothy (Acts xvi. 3), and, possibly, that he may have encouraged circumcision in some other similar cases. Or it may have been inferred from the fact (which was undoubtedly true) that Paul in general complied with the customs of the Jews when he was with them. But his conduct and example had been greatly perverted. He had never enjoined circumcision as necessary to salvation; and had never complied with Jewish customs where there was danger that it would be understood that he regarded them as at all indispensable, or as furnishing a ground of acceptance with God. ¶ *If I yet preach circumcision.* If I preach it as necessary to salvation; or if I enjoin it on those who are converted to Christianity. ¶ *Why do I yet suffer persecution?* That is, from the Jews. "Why do they oppose me? Circumcision is the peculiar badge of the Jewish religion; it implies all the rest (see ver. 2); and if I preach the necessity of that, it would satisfy the Jews, and save me from persecution. They would never persecute one who did that as they do me; and the fact that I am thus persecuted by them is full demonstration that I am not regarded as preaching the necessity of circumcision." It is remarkable that Paul does not expressly deny the charge. The reason may be, that his own word would be called in question,

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

or that it might require much explanation to show *why* he had recommended circumcision in any case, as in the case of Timothy; Acts xvi. 3. But the fact that he was persecuted by the Jews settled the question, and showed that he did not preach the necessity of circumcision in any such sense as to satisfy them, or in any such sense as was claimed by the false teachers in Galatia. In regard to the fact that Paul was persecuted by the Jews; see Acts xiv. 1, 2, 19; xvii. 4, 5, 13; comp. Paley, *Horæ Paulinæ*, Galat. No. V. ¶ *Then is the offence of the cross ceased.* "For if I should preach the necessity of circumcision, as is alleged, the offence of the cross of Christ would be removed. The necessity of depending on the merits of the sacrifice made on the cross would be taken away, since then men could be saved by conformity to the laws of Moses. The very thing that I have so much insisted on, and that has been such a stumbling-block to the Jews (Note, 1 Cor. i. 23), that conformity to their rites was of no avail, and that they must be saved only by the merits of a crucified Saviour, would be done away with." Paul means that if this had been done, he would have saved himself from giving offence, and from the evils of persecution. He would have preached that men could be saved by conformity to Jewish rites, and that would have saved him from all the persecutions which he had endured in consequence of preaching the necessity of salvation by the cross.

12. *I would they were even cut off.* That is, as I understand it, from the communion of the church. So far am I, says Paul, from agreeing with them, and preaching the necessity of circumcision as they do, that I sincerely wish they were excluded from the church as unworthy a place among the children of God. For a very singular and monstrous interpretation of this passage, though adopted by Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact, Jerome, Grotius, Rosenmüller, Koppe, and

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not

others, the learned reader may consult Koppe on this verse. To my amazement, I find that this interpretation has also been adopted by Robinson in his Lexicon, on the word ἀποκόπτω. I will state the opinion in the words of Koppe. *Non modo circumcidant se, sed, si velint, etiam mutilant se—ipsa genitalia resecant.* The simple meaning is, I think, that Paul wished that the authors of these errors and disturbances were excluded from the church. ¶ *Which trouble you.* Who pervert the true doctrines of salvation, and who thus introduce error into the church. Error always sooner or later causes trouble; comp. Note, 1 Cor. v. 7.

13. *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty.* Freedom from Jewish rites and ceremonies; see the Notes on chap. iii. 28; iv. 9, 21—31. The meaning here is, that Paul wished the false teachers removed *because* true Christians had been called unto liberty, and they were abridging and destroying that liberty. They were not in subjection to the law of Moses, or to any thing else that savoured of bondage. They were free; free from the servitude of sin, and free from subjection to expensive and burdensome rites and customs. They were to remember this as a great and settled principle; and so vital a truth was this, and so important that it should be maintained, and so great the evil of forgetting it, that Paul says he earnestly wishes (ver. 12) that all who would reduce them to that state of servitude were cut off from the Christian church. ¶ *Only use not liberty, &c.* The word *use* here introduced by our translators, obscures the sense. The idea is, "You are called to liberty, but it is not liberty for an occasion to the flesh. It is not freedom from virtuous restraints, and from the laws of God. It is liberty from the servitude of sin, and religious rites and ceremonies, not freedom from the necessary restraints of virtue." It was necessary to give this caution, because, (1.) There was

<sup>a</sup> liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve <sup>b</sup> one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this,

<sup>a</sup> 1 Co. 8.9; 1 Pe. 2.16. <sup>b</sup> 1 John 3.18.

a strong tendency in all converts from heathenism to relapse again into their former habits. Licentiousness abounded, and where they had been addicted to it before their conversion, and where they were surrounded by it on every hand, they were in constant danger of falling into it again. A bare and naked declaration, therefore, that they had been called to *liberty*, to freedom from restraint, might have been misunderstood, and some might have supposed that they were free from *all* restraints. (2.) It is needful to guard the doctrine from abuse at all times. There has been a strong tendency, as the history of the church has shown, to abuse the doctrine of grace. The doctrine that Christians are "free;" that there is liberty to them from restraint, has been perverted always by Antinomians, and been made the occasion of their indulging freely in sin. And the result has shown that nothing was more important than to guard the doctrine of *Christian liberty*, and to show exactly what Christians are *freed from*, and what laws are still binding on them. Paul is, therefore, at great pains to show that the doctrines which he had maintained did not lead to licentiousness, and did not allow the indulgence of sinful and corrupt passions. ¶ *An occasion*. As allowing indulgence to the flesh, or as a furtherance or help to corrupt passions; see the word explained in the Notes on Rom. vii. 8. ¶ *To the flesh*. The word flesh is often used in the writings of Paul to denote corrupt and gross passions and affections; see Notes on Rom. vii. 18; viii. 1. ¶ *But by love serve one another*. By the proper manifestation of love one to another strive to promote each other's welfare. To do this will not be inconsistent with the freedom of the gospel. When there is *love* there is no servitude. Duty is pleasant, and offices of kindness agree-

<sup>c</sup> Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

<sup>c</sup> Le. 19.18; Mat. 22.39, 40; James 2.8.

able. Paul does not consider them as freed from *all* law and *all* restraint; but they are to be governed by the law of love. They were not to feel that they were so free that they might lawfully give indulgence to the desires of the flesh, but they were to regard themselves as under the law to love one another; and thus they would fulfil the law of Christian freedom.

14. *For all the law is fulfilled, &c.* That is, this expresses the substance of the whole law; it embraces and comprises all. The apostle of course here alludes to the law in regard to our duty to our fellow-men, since that was the point which he particularly enforces. He is saying that this law would counteract all the evil workings of the flesh, and if this were fulfilled, all our duty to others would be discharged. A similar sentiment he has expressed in Rom. xiii. 8—10; see Notes on that passage. The turn here in the discussion is worthy of particular notice. With great skill he changes the subject from a doctrinal argument to a strain of practical remark, and furnishes most important lessons for the right mode of overcoming our corrupt and sensual passions, and discharging our duty to others. ¶ *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, &c*; see this explained in the Note on Mat. xix. 19.

15. *But if ye bite*. The word here used (*δάρω*), means, properly, to bite, to sting; and here seems to be used in the sense of contending and striving—a metaphor not improbably taken from dogs and wild beasts. ¶ *And devour one another*. As wild beasts do. The sense is, "if you contend with each other;" and the reference is, probably, to the strifes which would arise between the two parties in the churches—the Jewish and the Gentile converts. ¶ *Take heed that ye be not consumed, &c.* As wild beasts contend sometimes until both are

16 *This* I say then, Walk <sup>a</sup> in the Spirit, and <sup>1</sup> ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For <sup>b</sup> the flesh lusteth against

<sup>a</sup> Ro.8.1,4,13.

<sup>1</sup> or, fulfil not.

the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary <sup>c</sup> the one to the other; so that <sup>d</sup> ye cannot do the things that ye would.

<sup>b</sup> Ro.7.21—23.

<sup>c</sup> Ro.8.6,7.

<sup>d</sup> Ro.7.15,19.

slain. Thus, the idea is, in their contentions they would destroy the spirituality and happiness of each other; their characters would be ruined; and the church be overthrown. The readiest way to destroy the spirituality of a church, and to annihilate the influence of religion, is to excite a spirit of contention.

16. *This I say then.* This is the true rule about overcoming the propensities of your carnal natures, and of avoiding the evils of strife and contention. ¶ *Walk.* The Christian life is often represented as a journey, and the word *walk*, in the scripture, is often equivalent to *live*; Mark vii. 5; Notes, Rom. iv. 12; vi. 4; viii. 1. ¶ *In the Spirit.* Live under the influences of the Holy Spirit; admit those influences fully into your hearts. Do not resist him, but yield to all his suggestions; see Note, Rom. viii. 1. What the Holy Spirit would produce, Paul states in ver. 22, 23. If a man would yield his heart to those influences, he would be able to overcome all his carnal propensities; and it is because he resists that Spirit, that he is ever overcome by the corrupt passions of his nature. Never was a better, a safer, or a more easy rule given to overcome our corrupt and sensual desires than that here furnished; comp. Notes, Rom. viii. 1—13. *And ye shall not fulfil*, &c. Marg. *Fulfil not*—as if it were a command. So Tindal renders it. But the more common interpretation, as it is the more significant, is that adopted by our translators. Thus it is not merely a command, it is the statement of an important and deeply interesting truth—that the only way to overcome the corrupt desires and propensities of our nature, is by submitting to the influences of the Holy Spirit. It is not by philosophy; it is not by mere resolutions to resist them; it is not by the force of education and laws; it is

only by admitting into our souls the influence of religion, and yielding ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. If we live under the influences of that Spirit, we need not fear the power of the sensual and corrupt propensities of our nature.

17. *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit.* The inclinations and desires of the flesh are contrary to those of the Spirit. They draw us away in an opposite direction, and while the Spirit of God would lead us one way, our carnal nature would lead us another, and thus produce the painful controversy which exists in our minds. The word "Spirit" here refers to the Spirit of God, and to his influences on the heart. ¶ *And these are contrary*, &c. They are opposite in their nature. They never can harmonize; see Rom. viii. 6, 7; comp. below ver. 19—23. The *contrariety* Paul has illustrated by showing what each produces; and they are as opposite as adultery, wrath, strife, murders, drunkenness, &c., are to love, joy, goodness, gentleness, and temperance. ¶ *So that ye cannot do the things that ye would*; see this sentiment illustrated in the Notes on Rom. vii. 15—19. The expression "cannot do" is stronger by far than the original, and it is doubted whether the original will bear this interpretation. The literal translation would be, "Lest what ye will, those things ye should do" (ὥστε μὴ εἰς ἐν θέλητε, ταῦτα ποιεῖτε). It is rendered by Doddridge, "So that ye do not the things that ye would." By Locke, "You do not the things that you propose to yourselves;" and Locke remarks on the passage, "Ours is the only translation that I know which renders it cannot." The Vulgate and the Syriac give a literal translation of the Greek, "So that you do not what you would." This is undoubtedly the true rendering; and, in the original, there is no declaration about the possibility or

the impossibility, the ability or the inability to do these things. It is simply a statement of a *fact*, as it is in Rom. vii. 15, 19. That statement is, that in the mind of a renewed man there is a contrariety in the two influences which bear on his soul—the Spirit of God inclining him in one direction, and the lusts of the flesh in another; that one of these influences is so great as in fact to restrain and control the mind, and prevent its doing what it would otherwise do; that when there is an inclination in one direction, there is a controlling and overpowering influence in another, producing a conflict, which prevents it, and which finally checks and restrains the mind. There is no reason for interpreting this, moreover, as seems always to be the case, of the overpowering tendency in the mind to evil, as if it taught that the Christian was desirous of doing good, but *could not*, on account of his indwelling corruption. So far as the language of Paul or the fact is concerned, it may be understood of just the opposite, and may mean, that such are the restraints and influences of the Holy Spirit on the heart, that the Christian *does not* the evil which he otherwise would, and to which his corrupt nature inclines him. He (Paul) is exhorting them (ver. 16) to walk in the Spirit, and assures them that thus they would not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. To encourage them to this, he reminds them that there were contrary principles in their minds, the influences of the Spirit of God, and a carnal and downward tendency of the flesh. These are contrary one to the other; and such are, in fact, the influences of the Spirit on the mind, that the Christian does not do the things which he otherwise would. So understood, or understood in any fair interpretation of the original, it makes no assertion about the ability or inability of man to do right or wrong. It affirms as a *fact*, that where these opposite principles exist, a man does not do the things which otherwise he would do. If a man *could not* do otherwise than he actually does, he would not be to blame. Whether a Christian *could not* resist

the influences of the Holy Spirit, and yield to the corrupt desires of the flesh; or whether he *could not* overcome these evil propensities and do right always, are points on which the apostle here makes no affirmation. His is the statement of a *mere fact*, that where these counteracting propensities exist in the mind, there is a conflict, and that the man does not do what he otherwise would do.

[The translation of this clause which the author has given, may be allowed. It is certainly adopted by many Calvinists, and by Mr. Scott among the number. Yet Bloomfield, who cannot be suspected of any great leaning towards that class of theologians, defends the common translation. "I am surprised," says he, "that Mr. Locke should think our common version is singular in the sense it assigns. The Latin versions are indeed dubious, but most of the early commentators were inclined to adopt the sense 'cannot do,' and so almost all eminent Biblical critics for the last century." Nor would we object to the meaning which the author has attached to the clause, viz. that such are the restraints and influences of the Holy Spirit on the heart, that the Christian *does not* the evil which he otherwise would. This sense is ably advocated by Dr. Wardlaw, in his Discourses on the Socinian controversy. He contends, that in this view, the connection is simple and obvious; and affirms "that the Spirit's opposition to the flesh, for the purpose of preventing the indulgence of its inclinations, is either assigned as a reason for the statement, that if they 'walked in the Spirit,' the lust of the flesh would not be fulfilled, or is presented as an encouragement to compliance with the admonition, so to walk;" otherwise, he thinks no legitimate sequence can be found in the apostle's exhortation; 5th edit. p. 398. Yet, were we disposed to insist on the other sense, might not the terrible contest between the fleshly and the spiritual nature be alleged as the apostle's reason for the exhortation, continually to abide, to *walk* in the Spirit as the only remedy for this perpetual malady? And, in this way, the sequence is just as natural and obvious as in the other view. Mr. Scott and many other commentators combine both senses. "Believers do not the things which they would. They are not so holy as they long to be; nor yet do they indulge those corrupt inclinations which still rise up in their hearts, and cause them much trouble."—Comment in loco. Our author's assertion, therefore, that this passage "seems *always* to be interpreted of the overpowering tendency in the mind to evil," admits of many exceptions, even on the Calvinistic side; and the implied censure, that passages are violently strained to support opinion, on the subject of human inability, different from his own, falls to the ground. The new sense, which, by implication, he affirms *never* to be mentioned by those of opposite views, is by them frequently asserted and vindicated!]

But apart altogether from the proposed translation of the clause, and the meaning attached to it in its amended form—admitting both; it may, notwithstanding, be observed, on



18 But if <sup>a</sup> ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh

<sup>a</sup> Ro.6.14; 8.2.

the whole passage, that if it contains nothing *directly* on the subject of human ability, yet the struggle it asserts between two opposite principles, the flesh and the spirit, in the renewed mind, is not over-favourable to *great* views as to what man *can* do, or *could* do. If in the renewed mind this can least prevail, and prevail to such an extent, as the passage intimates, what must be the state of the unrenewed mind? The answer is too obvious. Allow, that the apostle states no more than the *fact*, that, in consequence of this struggle, the Christian "does not do the things which otherwise he would do," and *even* take this in the sense of not doing the *evil* he otherwise would have done, still it follows, and with all the conviction of direct assertion, that, independently of spiritual aid, the man or the Christian *could not* or *would not* have acted rightly.

Mr. Barnes has expressed himself somewhat plainly on this subject under Rom. viii. 7, where the reader will find, in a supplementary Note on that passage, much that is applicable to what occurs here. "Whether," he there says, "the man *himself* might not obey the law, whether *he* has, or has not ability to do it, is a question which the apostle does not touch." He is careful, however, not directly to assert the affirmative, but leaves the reader to draw the inference in regard to the author's opinion. And in this place, especially, have we reason to complain of disingenuous ambiguity. The phraseology connected with this dispute, *can*, *could*, &c., should have been explained. If it had been affirmed that God requires nothing of us which is *physically* or *naturally* impossible for us to do; *e. g.* He does not require us to transport ourselves from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth, as angels do at his bidding, *because* for such service we have no *natural* powers—there could have been no disputing of this position. But if it be *natural* or *physical* power to which the author alludes, under the term *can* and *could*, why not say so, and by a brief explanation relieve his unthinking readers from their perplexity? If men *can* and *could* discharge duty only in so far as natural ability is concerned, but *morally* are allowed to be unable to think a good thought, all that sound Calvinists desire on this subject is conceded. Nor, remains there the slightest force in the objection, that "if a man *could not* do otherwise than he actually does, he would not be to blame." Men will not be taken to account for natural inability, for certainly they are not to blame that they have not the faculties of angels. But *moral* inability is *sin*, and for it we must answer. It is *rooted aversion* to that which is good. Meantime, statements, such as that quoted above, without explanation, have done unmeasurable mischief to certain classes of readers; and furnishing them with an argument against the doctrine of accountability, are fitted to harden them in sin.

There seems too much truth in the censure passed on the New School Divines of America, that even when they "retain the term *natural* in connection with ability, and thus appear to accord with those who are in the

<sup>b</sup> are manifest; which are *these*, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

<sup>b</sup> Mat.15.19; Ep.5.3—6; Col.3.5,6; Re.22.15.

habit of making the distinction (of natural and moral ability) in reality, they occupy very different ground. Though when they speak of ability, they frequently annex to it the word "natural," they seldom speak of inability at all; but produce the impression, that the ability which they preach is fully adequate to enable the sinner, independently of divine grace, to do all that God requires."—Old and New Views by James Wood, Philadelphia, p. 162. The same author asserts, and with some appearance of reason, that "though Mr. Barnes expresses himself with much more caution than Messrs. Finney and Duffield, it is apparent that he favours their sentiments." *Ibid.* page 168.

18. But if ye be led of the Spirit. If you submit to the teachings and guidance of the Holy Spirit. ¶ Ye are not under the law. You are under a different dispensation—the dispensation of the Spirit. You are free from the restraints and control of the Mosaic law, and are under the control of the Spirit of God.

19. Now the works of the flesh. What the flesh, or what corrupt and unrenewed human nature produces. ¶ Are manifest. Plain, well-known. The world is full of illustrations of what corrupt human nature produces, and as to the existence and nature of those works, no one can be ignorant. It is evident here that the word *σὰρξ*, *flesh*, is used to denote corrupt human nature, and not merely the body; since many of the vices here enumerated are the passions of the mind or the soul, rather than of the body. Such are "wrath," "strife," "heresies," "envyings" &c., which cannot be said to have their seat in the body. If the word, therefore, is used to denote human nature, the passage furnishes a sad commentary on its tendency, and on the character of man. It is closely parallel to the declaration of the Saviour in Matt. xv. 19. Of the nature of most of these sins, or works of the flesh, it is unnecessary to offer any comment. They are not so rare as not to be well known, and the meaning of the words requires little exposition. In regard to the existence of these vices as the result

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like :

of human nature, the Notes on Rom. i. may be examined ; or a single glance at the history of the past, or at the present condition of the heathen and a large part of the Christian world, would furnish an ample and a painful demonstration.

20. *Witchcraft*. Pretending to witchcraft. The apostle does not vouch for the actual existence of witchcraft ; but he says that what was known as such was a proof of the corrupt nature of man, and was one of the fruits of it. No one can doubt it. It was a system of imposture and falsehood throughout ; and nothing is a better demonstration of the depravity of the human heart than an extended and systematized attempt to impose on mankind. The word which is here used (*φαρμακία*, whence our word *pharmacy*, from *φάρμακον*, a medicine, poison, magic potion) means, properly, the preparing and giving of medicine. Then it means also poisoning, and also magic art, or enchantment ; because in savage nations pharmacy or medicine consisted much in magical incantations. Thence it means sorcery or enchantment, and it is so used uniformly in the New Testament. It is used only in Gal. v. 20 ; Rev. ix. 21 ; xviii. 23 ; xxi. 8. Some have supposed that it means here *poisoning*, a crime often practised ; but the more correct interpretation is, to refer it to the black art, or to pretensions to witchcraft, and the numerous delusions which have grown out of it, as a striking illustration of the corrupt and depraved nature of man. ¶ *Hatred*. Gr. *Hatreds*, in the plural. Antipathies, and want of love, producing contentions and strifes. ¶ *Variance*. Contentions ; see Note, Rom. i. 29. ¶ *Emulations* (*ζηλοί*). In a bad sense, meaning heart-burning, or jealousy, or perhaps inordinate ambition. The sense is ardour or zeal in a bad cause, leading to strife, &c. ¶ *Wrath*. This also is plural

of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

in the Greek (*θυμοί*), meaning passions, *bursts of anger* ; Note, 2 Cor. xii. 20. ¶ *Strife*. Also plural in the Greek ; see Note, 2 Cor. xii. 20. ¶ *Seditions* ; see Note, Rom. xvi. 17. ¶ *Heresies* ; see Note, Acts v. 17 ; 1 Cor. xi. 19.

21. *Envyings* ; Note, 2 Cor. xii. 20. ¶ *Revellings* ; Notes, 2 Cor. xii. 20 ; Rom. xiii. 13. ¶ *And such like*. This class of evils, without attempting to specify all. ¶ *Of which I tell you before*. In regard to which I forewarn you. ¶ *As I have also told you in time past*. When he was with them. ¶ *Shall not inherit the kingdom of God*. Cannot possibly be saved ; see Notes on 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. In regard to this passage, we may remark ; (1.) That it furnishes the most striking and unanswerable proof of human depravity. Paul represents these things as “the works of the flesh,” the works of the unrenewed nature of man. They are such as human nature, when left to itself, everywhere produces. The world shows that such is the fact ; and we cannot but ask, is a nature producing this to be regarded as pure ? Is man an unfallen being ? Can he save himself ? Does he need no Saviour ? (2.) This passage is full of fearful admonition to those who indulge in any or all of these vices. Paul, inspired of God, has solemnly declared, that such cannot be saved. They *cannot* enter into the kingdom of heaven as they are. Nor is it *desirable* that they should. What would heaven be if filled up with adulterers, and fornicators, and idolaters, with the proud and envious, and with murderers, and drunkards ? To call such a place *heaven*, would be an abuse of the word. No one could wish to dwell there ; and such men *cannot* enter into heaven. (3.) The human heart must be changed, or man cannot be saved. This follows of course. If such is its tendency, then there is a

22 But the fruit <sup>a</sup> of the Spirit<sup>a</sup> John 15.5; Ep.5.9.

necessity for such a change as that in regeneration, in order that man may be happy and be saved. (4.) We should rejoice that such men *cannot*, with their present characters, be admitted to heaven. We should rejoice that there is one world where these vices are unknown, a world of perfect and eternal purity. When we look at the earth; when we see how these vices prevail; when we reflect that every land is polluted, and that we cannot traverse a continent or an island, visit a nook or corner of the earth, dwell in any city or town, where these vices do not exist, O how refreshing and invigorating is it to look forward to a pure heaven! How cheering the thought that there is one world where these vices are unknown; one world, all whose ample plains may be traversed, and the note of blasphemy shall never fall on the ear; one world, where virtue shall be safe from the arts of the seducer; one world where we may for ever dwell, and not one reeling and staggering drunkard shall ever be seen; where there shall be not one family in want and tears from the vice of its unfaithful head! With what joy should we look forward to that world! With what ardour should we pant that it may be our own!

22. *But the fruit of the Spirit.* That which the Holy Spirit produces. It is not without design, evidently, that the apostle uses the word "Spirit" here, as denoting that these things do not flow from our own nature. The vices above enumerated are the proper "works" or result of the operations of the human heart; the virtues which he enumerates are produced by a foreign influence—the agency of the Holy Spirit. Hence Paul does not trace them to our own hearts, *even when renewed*. He says that they are to be regarded as the proper result of the Spirit's operations on the soul. ¶ *Is love.* To God and to men. Probably the latter here is particularly intended, as the fruits of the Spirit are placed in contradistinction

is love, joy, peace, long-suffering gentleness, goodness, faith,

from those vices which lead to strife among men. On the meaning of the word *love*, see Notes on 1 Cor. xiii. 1; and for an illustration of its operations and effects, see the Notes on that whole chapter. ¶ *Joy.* In the love of God; in the evidences of pardon; in communion with the Redeemer, and in his service; in the duties of religion, in trial, and in the hope of heaven; see Notes, Rom. v. 2; comp. 1 Pet. i. 8. ¶ *Peace.* As the result of reconciliation with God; see Notes, Rom. v. 1. ¶ *Long-suffering.* In affliction and trial, and when injured by others; see Note, 1 Cor. xiii. 4. ¶ *Gentleness.* The same word which is translated *kindness* in 2 Cor. vi. 6; see Note on that place. The word means goodness, kindness, benignity; and is opposed to a harsh, crabbed, crooked temper. It is a disposition to be pleased; it is mildness of temper, calmness of spirit, an unruffled disposition, and a disposition to treat all with urbanity and politeness. This is one of the regular effects of the Spirit's operations on the heart. Religion makes no one crabbed, and morose, and sour. It sweetens the temper; corrects an irritable disposition; makes the heart kind; disposes us to make all around us as happy as possible. This is true politeness; a kind of politeness which can far better be learned in the school of Christ than in that of Chesterfield; by the study of the New Testament than under the direction of the dancing-master. ¶ *Goodness;* see Note on Rom. xv. 14. Here the word seems to be used in the sense of *beneficence*, or a disposition to do good to others. The sense is, that a Christian must be a good man. ¶ *Faith.* On the meaning of the word faith, see Note on Mark xvi. 16. The word here may be used in the sense of *fidelity*, and may denote that the Christian will be a *faithful man*, a man faithful to his word and promises; a man who can be trusted or confided in. It is probable that the word is used in this sense because the object

23 Meekness, temperance: against  
 " such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's  
 a 1 Ti. 1.9. 1 or, *passions*. b Ro. 8.4,5.

of the apostle is not to speak of the feelings which we have towards God so much as to illustrate the influences of the Spirit in directing and controlling our feelings towards men. True religion makes a man *faithful*. The Christian is faithful as a man; faithful as a neighbour, friend, father, husband, son. He is faithful to his contracts; faithful to his promises. No man can be a Christian who is not thus faithful, and all pretensions to being under the influences of the Spirit when such fidelity does not exist, are deceitful and vain.

23. *Meekness*; see Note, Mat. v. 5. ¶ *Temperance*. The word here used, (*ἐνκρασία*), means properly *self-control, continence*. It is derived from *ἐν* and *κράτος*, *strength*, and has reference to the *power* or ascendancy which we have over exciting and evil passions of all kinds. It denotes the self-rule which a man has over the evil propensities of his nature. Our word *temperance* we use now in a much more limited sense, as referring mainly to abstinence from intoxicating drinks. But the word here used is employed in a much more extended signification. It includes the dominion over all evil propensities, and may denote continence, chastity, self-government, moderation in regard to all indulgences as well as abstinence from intoxicating drinks. See the word explained in the Notes on Acts xxiv. 25. The sense here is, that the influences of the Holy Spirit on the heart make a man *moderate* in all indulgences; teach him to restrain his passions, and to govern himself; to control his evil propensities, and to subdue all inordinate affection. The Christian will not only abstain from intoxicating drinks, but from all exciting passions; he will be temperate in his manner of living, and in the government of his temper. This *may* be applied to temperance properly so called with us; but it should not be limited to that. A Christian *must* be

have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If <sup>b</sup> we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

a temperate man; and if the effect of his religion is not to produce this, it is false and vain. Abstinence from intoxicating drinks, as well as from all improper excitement, is demanded by the very genius of his religion, and on this subject there is no danger of drawing the cords too close. No man was ever injured by the strictest temperance, by total abstinence from ardent spirits, and from wine as a beverage; no man is certainly safe who does not abstain; no man, it is believed, can be in a proper frame of mind for religious duties who indulges in the habitual use of intoxicating drinks. Nothing does more scandal to religion than such indulgences; and, other things being equal, he is the most under the influence of the Spirit of God who is the most thoroughly a man of temperance. ¶ *Against such there is no law*. That is, there is no law to condemn such persons. These are not the things which the law denounces. These, therefore, are the true freemen; free from the condemning sentence of the law, and free in the service of God. Law condemns sin; and they who evince the spirit here referred to are free from its denunciations.

24. *And they that are Christ's*. All who are true Christians. ¶ *Have crucified the flesh*. The corrupt passions of the soul have been put to death; i. e., destroyed. They are as though they were dead, and have no power over us; see Note, chap. ii. 20. ¶ *With the affections*. Marg. *Passions*. All corrupt desires. ¶ *And lusts*; see Note, Rom. i. 24.

25. *If we live in the Spirit*. Note, ver. 16. The sense of this verse probably is, "We who are Christians profess to be under the influences of the Holy Spirit. By his influences and agency is our spiritual life. We profess not to be under the dominion of the flesh; not to be controlled by its appetites and desires. Let us then act in this manner, and as if we be-

26 Let *a* us not be desirous of

*a* Ph.2.3.

loved this. Let us yield ourselves to his influences, and show that we are controlled by that Spirit." It is an earnest exhortation to Christians to yield wholly to the agency of the Holy Spirit on their hearts, and to submit to his guidance; see Notes, Rom. viii. 5, 9.

26. *Let us not be desirous of vain-glory.* The word here used (*κενδοξία*) means proud or vain of empty advantages, as of birth, property, eloquence, or learning. The reference here is probably to the paltry competitions which arose on account of these supposed advantages. It is possible that this might have been one cause of the difficulties existing in the churches of Galatia, and the apostle is anxious wholly to check and remove it. The Jews prided themselves on their birth, and men are everywhere prone to overvalue the supposed advantages of birth and blood. The doctrines of Paul are, that on great and most vital respects men are on a level; that these things contribute nothing to salvation (Notes, chap. iii. 28); and that Christians should esteem them of little importance, and that they should not be suffered to interfere with their fellowship, or to mar their harmony and peace. ¶ *Provoking one another.* The sense is, that they who are desirous of vainglory, do provoke one another. They provoke those whom they regard as inferiors by a haughty carriage and a contemptuous manner towards them. They look upon them often with contempt; pass them by with disdain; treat them as beneath their notice; and this provokes on the other hand hard feeling, and hatred, and a disposition to take revenge. When men regard themselves as equal in their great and vital interests; when they feel that they are fellow-heirs of the grace of life; when they feel that they belong to one great family, and are in their great interests on a level; deriving no advantage from birth and blood; on a level as descendants of the same apostate father; as being

vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.

themselves sinners; on a level at the foot of the cross, at the communion table, on beds of sickness, in the grave, and at the bar of God; when they feel this, then the consequences here referred to will be avoided. There will be no haughty carriage such as to provoke opposition; and on the other hand there will be no envy on account of the superior rank of others. ¶ *Envying one another.* On account of their superior wealth, rank, talent, learning. The true way to cure envy is to make men feel that in their great and important interests they are on a level. Their great interests are beyond the grave. The distinctions of this life are temporary, and are comparative trifles. Soon all will be on a level in the grave, and at the bar of God and in heaven. Wealth, and honour, and rank do not avail there. The poorest man will wear as bright a crown as the rich; the man of most humble birth will be admitted as near the throne as he who can boast the longest line of illustrious ancestors. Why should a man who is soon to wear a "crown incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away," envy him who has a ducal coronet here, or a royal diadem—baubles that are soon to be laid aside for ever? Why should he, though poor here, who is soon to inherit the treasures of heaven where "moth and rust do not corrupt," envy him who can walk over a few acres as his own, or who has accumulated a glittering pile of dust, soon to be left for ever? Why should he who is soon to wear the robes of salvation, made "white in the blood of the Lamb," envy him who is "clothed in purple and fine linen," or who can adorn himself and his family in the most gorgeous attire which art and skill can make, soon to give place to the winding-sheet; soon to be succeeded by the simple garb which the most humble wears in the grave? If men feel that their great interests are beyond the tomb; that in the important matter of salvation they are on a level; that soon they are to be undistinguish-

## CHAPTER VI.

**B**RETHREN, <sup>1</sup> if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which

ed beneath the clods of the valley, how unimportant comparatively would it seem to adorn their bodies, to advance their name and rank and to improve their estates! The rich and the great would cease to look down with contempt on those of more humble rank, and the poor would cease to envy those above them, for they are soon to be their equals in the grave; their equals, perhaps their superiors in heaven!

## CHAPTER VI.

## ANALYSIS.

THIS chapter is composed entirely of affectionate exhortation, and the expression of the apostle's earnest solicitude in the behalf of the Christians in Galatia. He exhorts them (ver. 1) to bring back to the ways of virtue any one who through the strength of strong temptation had been led astray. He entreats them (ver. 2) to bear one another's burdens, and thus to show that they were true friends of Christ, and governed by his laws. He entreats them not to be lifted up with pride, and not to affix an inordinate estimate to any thing that they possessed, assuring them that their true estimate was to be formed from the character of their own works; ver. 3—5. He exhorts them to minister to the wants of their public teachers, the preachers of the gospel; ver. 6. In ver. 7—10, he reminds them of the solemn day of judgment, when all will be tried; assures them that men will be judged and rewarded according to their works; and entreats them not to be weary in well-doing, but to labour on patiently in doing good, with the assurance that they should reap in due season. In ver. 11, he shows them the interest which he felt in them by his having done what was unusual for him, and what perhaps he had done in no other instance—writing an entire letter in his own hand. He then states the true reason why others wished them to be circumcised. It was the dread of persecution, and not any real love to the cause of religion.

are spiritual restore <sup>a</sup> such an one in the spirit of meekness; con-  
1 or, *although*. a Ja. 5.19,20.

They did not themselves keep the law, and they only desired to glory in the number of converts to their views; ver. 12, 13. But Paul says that *he* would glory in nothing but in the cross of Christ. By that he had been crucified to the world, and the world had been crucified to him (ver. 14); and he repeats the solemn assurance that in the Christian religion neither circumcision nor uncircumcision was of any importance whatever; ver. 15. This was the true rule of life, and on as many as walked according to this principle, he invokes the blessing of God; ver. 16. He closes the epistle by entreating them to give him no more trouble. He bore in his body already the marks or sufferings which he had received in the cause of the Lord Jesus. His trials already were sufficient; and he entreats them to spare him from future molestation (ver. 17), and closes with the benediction; ver. 18.

1. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken.* Marg. *Although*. It is a case which the apostle supposes might happen. Christians were not perfect; and it was possible that they who were true Christians might be surprised by temptation, and fall into sin. The word rendered *be overtaken* (*προληφθῇ* from *πρὸς λαμβάνω*), means properly to take before another, to anticipate (1 Cor. xi. 21); then to be before taken or caught; and may here mean either that one had been *formerly* guilty of sin or had been recently *hurried on* by his passions or by temptations to commit a fault. It is probable that the latter here is the true sense, and that it means, if a man is found to be overtaken by any sin; if his passions, or if temptation get the better of him. Tindal renders it, "If any man be fallen by chance into any fault." It refers to cases of surprise, or of sudden temptation. Christians do not commit sin deliberately, and as a part of the plan of life; but they may be surprised by sudden temptation, or urged on by impetuous or head-strong pas-

sidering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

sion, as David and Peter were. Paul does not speak of the possibility of restoring one who deliberately forms the plan of sinning; he does not suppose that such a man could be a Christian, and that it would be proper to speak of *restoring* such a man. ¶ *Ye which are spiritual.* Who are under the influences of the Holy Spirit; see Note on chap. v. 22, 23. The apostle, in this verse, refers evidently to those who have fallen into some sensual indulgence (chap. v. 19—21), and says that they who have escaped these temptations, and who are under the influences of the Spirit, should recover such persons. It is a very important qualification for those who would recover others from sin, that they should not be guilty of the same sin themselves. Reformers should be holy men; men who exercise discipline in the church should be "spiritual" men—men in whom implicit confidence may be properly reposed. ¶ *Restore such an one.* On the meaning of the word here used, see Note on 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Here it means, not to restore him to the church after he has been excluded, but *set him right*, bring him back, recover him from his errors and his faults. The apostle does not say in what manner this is to be done; but it is usually to be done doubtless by affectionate admonition, by faithful instruction, and by prayer. Discipline or punishment should not be resorted to until the other methods are tried in vain; Mat. xviii. 15—17. ¶ *In the spirit of meekness.* With a kind, forbearing, and forgiving spirit; Note, Mat. v. 5. Not with anger; not with a lordly and overbearing mind; not with a love of finding others in fault, and with a desire for inflicting the discipline of the church; not with a harsh and unforgiving temper, but with love, and gentleness, and humility, and patience, and with a readiness to forgive when wrong has been done. This is an essential qualification for restoring and recovering an offending

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

α Ro. 15. 1.

brother. No man should attempt to rebuke or admonish another who cannot do it in the spirit of meekness; no man should engage in any way in the work of reform who has not such a temper of mind. ¶ *Considering thyself, &c.* Remembering how liable you are yourself to err; and how much kindness and indulgence should therefore be shown to others. You are to act as if you felt it possible that you might also be overtaken with a fault; and you should act as you would wish that others should do towards you. Pliny (Epis. viii. 22), has expressed a similar sentiment in the following beautiful language. "Atque ego optimum et emendatissimum existimo, qui cæteris ita ignoscit, tanquam ipse quotidie peccet; ita peccatis abstinet, tanquam nemini ignoscat. Proinde hoc domi, hoc foris, hoc in omni vitæ genere teneamus, ut nobis implacabiles simus, exorabiles istis etiam, qui dare veniam nisi sibi nesciunt." The doctrine taught by Paul is, that such is human infirmity, and such the strength of human depravity, that no one knows into what sins he may himself fall. He may be tempted to commit the same sins which he endeavours to amend in others; he may be left to commit even worse sins. If this is the case, we should be tender while we are firm; forgiving while we set our faces against evil; prayerful while we rebuke; and compassionate when we are compelled to inflict on others the discipline of the church. Every man who has any proper feelings, when he attempts to recover an erring brother should pray for him and for himself also; and will regard his duty as only half done, and that very imperfectly, if he does not "consider also that he himself may be tempted."

2. *Bear ye one another's burdens;* see Note, Rom. xv. 1. Bear with each other; help each other in the divine life. The sense is, that every man has peculiar temptations and easily besetting

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

2 2 Co. 13. 5.

sins, which constitute a heavy burden. We should aid each other in regard to these, and help one another to overcome them. ¶ *And so fulfil the law of Christ.* The peculiar law of Christ, requiring us to love one another; see Note on John xiii. 34. This was the distinguishing law of the Redeemer; and they could in no way better fulfil it than by aiding each other in the divine life. The law of Christ would not allow us to reproach the offender, or to taunt him, or to rejoice in his fall. We should help him to take up his load of infirmities, and sustain him by our counsels, our exhortations, and our prayers. Christians, conscious of their infirmities, have a right to the sympathy and the prayers of their brethren. They should not be cast off to a cold and heartless world; a world rejoicing over their fall, and ready to brand them as hypocrites. They should be pressed to the warm bosom of brotherly kindness; and prayer should be made to ascend without ceasing around an erring and a fallen brother. Is this the case in regard to all who bear the Christian name?

3. *For if a man think himself to be something, &c.*; see chap. v. 26. This is designed, evidently, to be another reason why we should be kind and tender to those who have erred. It is, that even those who are most confident may fall. They who feel secure, and think it impossible that they should sin, are not safe. They may be wholly deceived, and may be nothing, when they have the highest estimate of themselves. They may themselves fall into sin, and have need of all the sympathy and kindness of their brethren. ¶ *When he is nothing.* When he has no strength, and no moral worth. When he is not such as he apprehends, but is lifted up with vain self-conceit. ¶ *He deceiveth himself.* He understands not his own character. "The worst part of the fraud falls on his own head."—*Doddridge.* He does

4 But let every man prove <sup>a</sup> his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself <sup>b</sup> alone, and not in another:

b Pr. 14. 14.

not accomplish what he expected to do; and instead of acquiring reputation from others, as he expected, he renders himself contemptible in their sight.

4. *But let every man prove.* That is, try or examine in a proper manner. Let him form a proper estimate of what is due to himself, according to his real character. Let him compare himself with the word of God, and the infallible rule which he has given, and by which we are to be judged in the last great day; comp. Note, Rom. xii. 3; 1 Cor. xi. 28; 2 Cor. xiii. 5. ¶ *His own work.* What he does. Let him form a fair and impartial estimate of his own character. ¶ *And then shall he have rejoicing.* That is, he will be appropriately rewarded, and will meet with no disappointment. The man who forms an improper estimate of his own character will be sure to be disappointed. The man who examines himself, and who forms no extravagant expectation in regard to what is due to himself, will be appropriately rewarded, and will be made happy. If, by the careful examination of himself, he finds his life to be virtuous, and his course of conduct pure; if he has done no wrong to others, and if he finds evidence that he is a child of God, then he will have cause of rejoicing. ¶ *In himself alone;* comp. Prov. xiv. 14: "A good man shall be satisfied from himself." The sentiment is, that he will find in himself a source of pure joy. He will not be dependent on the applause of others for happiness. In an approving conscience; in the evidence of the favour of God; in an honest effort to lead a pure and holy life, he will have happiness. The source of his joys will be within; and he will not be dependent, as the man of ambition, and the man who thinks of himself more highly than he ought, will, on the favours of a capricious multitude, and on the breath of popular applause. ¶ *And not in another.* He will not be dependent



5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

6 Let <sup>a</sup> him that is taught in the

a 1 Co. 9.11—14.

on others for happiness. Here is the true secret of happiness. It consists, (1.) In not forming an improper estimate of ourselves; in knowing just what we are, and what is due to us; in not thinking ourselves to be something, when we are nothing. (2.) In leading such a life that it may be examined *to the core*, that we may know exactly what we are without being distressed or pained. That is, in having a good conscience, and in the honest and faithful discharge of our duty to God and man. (3.) In not being dependent on the fickle applause of the world for our comfort. The man who has no internal resources, and who has no approving conscience; who is happy only when others smile, and miserable when they frown, is a man who can have no security for enjoyment. The man who has a good conscience, and who enjoys the favour of God, and the hope of heaven, carries with him the source of perpetual joy. He cannot be deprived of it. His purse may be taken, and his house robbed, but the highwayman cannot rob him of his comforts. He carries with him an unfailing source of happiness when abroad, and the same source of happiness abides with him at home; he bears it into society, and it remains with him in solitude; it is his companion when in health, and when surrounded by his friends, and it is no less his companion when his friends leave him, and when he lies upon a bed of death.

5. *For every man shall bear his own burden.* This seems to be a kind of proverbial saying; and it means here, every man shall have his proper reward. If he is a virtuous man, he will be happy; if a vicious man, he will be miserable. If a virtuous man, he will have the source of happiness in himself; if a sinner, he must bear the proper penalty of his sin. In the great day every man shall be properly rewarded. Knowing this, we should be little anxious about the sentiments

word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

7 Be not deceived; God is not

of others, and should seek to maintain a good conscience towards God and man. The design of this passage is, to prevent men from forming an improper estimate of themselves, and of the opinions of others. Let a man feel that he is soon to stand at the judgment-seat, and it will do much to keep him from an improper estimate of his own importance; let him feel that he must give an account to God, and that his great interests are to be determined by the estimate which God will affix to his character, and it will teach him that the opinion of the world is of little value. This will restrain his vanity and ambition. This will show him that the great business of life is to secure the favour of God, and to be prepared to give up his account; and there is no way so effectual of checking ambition, and subduing vanity and the love of applause, as to feel that we are soon to stand at the awful bar of God.

6. *Let him that is taught in the word.* In the word of God; *i. e.* the gospel. ¶ *Communicate unto him.* Let him share with him who teaches; let there be a common participation of all good things. ¶ *In all good things.* In every thing that is needful for their comfortable subsistence. On the duty here enjoined, see Notes on 1 Cor. ix. 11—13.

7. *Be not deceived.* That is, in regard to your character, and your hopes for eternity. This is a formula of introduction to some admonition that is peculiarly weighty and important. It implies that there was *danger* that they would be deceived in reference to their character. The *sources* of the danger were the corruption of their own hearts, the difficulty of knowing their true character, the instructions of false teachers, &c.; see Note on 1 Cor. vi. 9. ¶ *God is not mocked.* He cannot be imposed on, or mocked. He knows what our real character is, and he will judge us accordingly. The word rendered *mocked*

mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

(μυστεριον), means, properly, to turn up the nose in scorn; hence to mock, or deride, or insult. The sense is, that God could not be imposed on, or could not be insulted with impunity, or successfully. To *mock* is, properly, (1.) To imitate, to mimic; to imitate in contempt or derision. (2.) To deride, to laugh at, to ridicule. (3.) To defeat, or to illude, or to disappoint. (4.) To fool, to tantalize.—*Webster*. Here it cannot mean to *imitate*, or to *mimic*, but it refers to the principles of the divine administration, and must mean that they could not be treated with contempt, or successfully evaded. They could not hope to illude or impose on God. His principles of government were settled, and they could not impose on him. To what the reference is here, is not perfectly plain. In the connection in which it stands, it seems to refer to the support of the ministers of the gospel; and Paul introduces the general principle, that as a man sows he will reap, to show them what will be the effect of a liberal and proper use of their property. If they made a proper use of it; if they employed it for benevolent purposes; if they appropriated what they should to the support of religion, they would reap accordingly. God could not be imposed on in regard to this. They could not make him think that they had true religion when they were sowing to the flesh, and when they were spending their money in purchasing pleasure, and in luxury and vanity. No zeal, however ardent; no prayers, however fervent or long, no professions, however loud, would impose on God. And to make such prayers, and to manifest such zeal and such strong professions, while the heart was with the world, and they were spending their money for every thing else but religion, was mocking God. Alas, how much mockery of God like this still prevails! How much, when men seem disposed to make God believe that they are exceedingly zealous and devoted, while their heart is truly

8 For he that soweth to his<sup>a</sup> flesh shall of the flesh reap corrup-

a Job 4.8; Pr.22.8; Ho.8.7.

with the world! How many long prayers are offered; how much zeal is shown; how many warm professions are made, *as if* to make God and man believe that the heart was truly engaged in the cause of religion, while little or nothing is given in the cause of benevolence; while the ministers of religion are suffered to starve; and while the "loud professor" rolls in wealth, and is distinguished for luxury of living, for gayety of apparel, for splendour of equipage, and for extravagance in parties of pleasure! Such professors attempt to mock God. They are really sowing to the flesh; and of the flesh they must reap corruption. ¶ *For whatsoever a man soweth, &c.*; see Note, 2 Cor. ix. 6. This figure is taken from agriculture. A man who sows wheat, shall reap wheat; he who sows barley, shall reap barley; he who sows cockle, shall reap cockle. Every kind of grain will produce grain like itself. So it is in regard to our works. He who is liberal, shall be dealt with liberally; he who is righteous, shall be rewarded; he who is a sinner, shall reap according to his deeds.

8. *For he that soweth to his flesh* That makes provision for the indulgence of fleshly appetites and passions; see Notes on chap. v. 19—21. He who makes use of his property to give indulgence to licentiousness, intemperance, and vanity. ¶ *Shall of the flesh*. From the flesh, or as that which indulgence in fleshly appetites properly produces. Punishment, under the divine government, is commonly in the line of offences. The punishment of licentiousness and intemperance in this life is commonly loathsome and offensive disease; and when long indulged, the sensualist becomes haggard, and bloated, and corrupted, and sinks into the grave. Such, also, is often the punishment of luxurious living, of a pampered appetite, of gluttony, as well as of intemperate drinking. But if the punishment does not follow in this life, it will be sure to overtake the sensualist in the world

tion; but he that soweth to the Spirit, <sup>a</sup> shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9 And let <sup>b</sup> us not be weary in

<sup>a</sup> Pr. 11. 18; Ja. 3. 18.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Co. 15. 58.

to come. There he shall reap ruin final and everlasting. ¶ *Corruption.* (1.) By disease. (2.) In the grave—the home to which the sensualist rapidly travels. (3.) In the world of woe. There all shall be corrupt. His virtue—even the semblance of virtue, shall all be gone. His understanding, will, fancy—his whole soul shall be debased and corrupt. No virtue will linger and live on the plains of ruin, but all shall be depravity and woe. Every thing in hell is debased and corrupt; and the whole harvest of sensuality in this world and the world to come, is degradation and defilement. ¶ *But he that soweth to the Spirit.* He who follows the leadings and cultivates the affections which the Holy Spirit would produce; see Notes on chap. v. 22, 23. ¶ *Shall of the Spirit.* As the result of following the leadings of the Spirit. ¶ *Reap life everlasting;* see Note on Rom. ii. 7.

9. *And let us not be weary in well-doing;* see Note on 1 Cor. xv. 58. The reference here is particularly to the support of the ministers of religion (ver. 6), but the apostle makes the exhortation general. Christians sometimes become weary. There is so much opposition to the best plans for doing good; there is so much to be done; there are so many calls on their time and their charities; and there is often so much ingratitude among those whom they endeavour to benefit, that they become disheartened. Such Paul addresses, and exhorts them not to give over, but to persevere. ¶ *For in due season.* At the day of judgment. Then we shall receive the full reward of all our self-denials and charities. ¶ *We shall reap, if we faint not.* If we do not give over, exhausted and disheartened. It is implied here, that unless a man perseveres in doing good to the end of life, he can hope for no reward. He who becomes disheartened, and who

well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if <sup>c</sup> we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, <sup>d</sup> let us do good unto all <sup>e</sup>

<sup>c</sup> He. 10. 36; Re. 2. 10.

<sup>d</sup> Ec. 9. 10.

<sup>e</sup> Mat. 5. 43; Tit. 3. 8.

gives over his efforts; he that is appalled by obstacles, and that faints on account of the embarrassments thrown in his way; he that pines for ease, and withdraws from the field of benevolence, shows that he has no true attachment to the cause, and that his heart has never been truly in the work of religion. He who becomes a true Christian, becomes such FOR ETERNITY. He has enlisted, never to withdraw. He becomes pledged to do good and to serve God *always*. No obstacles are to deter, no embarrassments are to drive him from the field. With the vigour of his youth, and the wisdom and influence of his riper years; with his remaining powers when enfeebled by age; with the last pulsation of life here, and with his immortal energies in a higher world, he is to do good. For that he is to live. In that he is to die; and when he awakes in the resurrection with renovated powers, he is to awake to an everlasting service of doing good, as far as he may have opportunity, in the kingdom of God.

10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men.* This is the true rule about doing good. "The opportunity to do good," says Cotton Mather, "imposes the obligation to do it." The simple rule is, that we are favoured with the opportunity, and that we have the power. It is not that we are to do it when it is convenient; or when it will advance the interest of a party; or when it may contribute to our fame; the rule is, that we are to do it when we have the opportunity. No matter how often that occurs; no matter how many objects of benevolence are presented—the more the better; no matter how much self-denial it may cost us; no matter how little *fame* we may get by it; still, if we have the *opportunity* to do good, we are to do it, and should be thankful for the privilege. And it is to be done *to all men*. Not

men, especially to them <sup>a</sup> who are of the household of faith.

11 Ye see how large a letter I  
<sup>a</sup> 1 John 3.14.

to our family only; not to our party; not to our neighbours; not to those of our own colour; not to those who live in the same land with us, but to all mankind. If we can reach and benefit a man who lives on the other side of the globe, whom we have never seen, and *shall* never see in this world or in the world to come, still we are to do him good. Such is Christianity. And in this, as in all other respects, it differs from the narrow and selfish spirit of *clanship* which prevails all over the world. ¶ *Especially*. On the same principle that a man is bound particularly to benefit his own family and friends. In his large and expansive zeal for the world at large, he is not to forget or neglect them. He is to feel that they have peculiar claims on him. They are near him. They are bound to him by tender ties. They may be particularly dependent on him. Christianity does not relax the ties which bind us to our country, our family, and our friends. It makes them more close and tender, and excites us more faithfully to discharge the duties which grow out of these relations. But, in addition to that, it excites us to do good to all men, and to bless the stranger as well as the friend; the man who has a different colour from our own, as well as he who has the same; the man who lives in another clime, as well as he who was born in the same country in which *we* live. ¶ *Of the household of faith*. Christians are distinguished from other men primarily by their *believing* the gospel, and by its influence on their lives.

11. *Ye see*. This might be rendered *see*, in the imperative. So Tindal renders it, "Behold." But it is more commonly supposed that it should be rendered in the indicative. The sense is not materially different whichever translation is adopted. The *object* of the apostle is, to direct their attention to the special proof of his love, which he had manifested in writing such a letter. ¶ *How large a letter*.

have written unto you with mine own hand.

12 As many as desire to make

Considerable variety has existed in regard to the interpretation of this phrase. The word here used and translated *how large* (*πῶς*), means, properly, *how great*. Some have supposed that it refers to the *size of the letters* which Paul made in writing the epistle—the length and crudeness of the characters which he used. Such interpreters suppose that he was not well versed in writing Greek, and that he used large letters, and those somewhat rudely made, like the Hebrew. So Doddridge and Whitby interpret it; and so Theodoret, Jerome, Theophylact, and some others. He might not, says Doddridge, have been well versed in the Greek characters; or "this inaccuracy of his writings might have been owing to the infirmity or weakness of his nerves, which he had hinted at before." Jerome says, that Paul was a Hebrew, and that he was unacquainted with the mode of writing Greek letters; and that because necessity demanded that he should write a letter in his own hand, contrary to his usual custom, he was obliged to form his characters in this crude manner. According to this interpretation, it was, (1.) A pledge to the Galatians that the epistle was genuine, since it bore the marks of his own handwriting; and, (2.) It was proof of special affection for them that he was willing to undergo this labour on their account. Others suppose that he means to refer to the *size of the epistle* which he had written. Such is the interpretation of Grotius, Koppe, Bloomfield, Clarke, Locke, Chandler, and is, indeed, the common interpretation, as it is the obvious one. According to this, it was proof of special interest in them, and regard for them, that he had written to them a whole letter with his own hand. Usually he employed an amanuensis, and added his name, with a brief benediction or remark at the close; see Notes, Rom. xvi. 22; 1 Cor. xvi. 21. What *induced* him to depart from his

a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suf-

fer persecution for the cross of Christ.

13 For neither they themselves

usual custom here is unknown. Jerome supposes that he refers here to *what follows* from this verse to the end of the epistle, as that which he had written with his own hand, but the word *ἑαυτῶν*, says Rosenmüller, refers rather to what he *had* written, than to that which he intended to write. On this verse, the reader may consult with advantage, Tholuck on the Life and Writings of Paul: German Selections, by Edwards and Park, Andover, 1839, pp. 35, 64, 65.

12. *As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh.* To be distinguished for their conformity to external rites and customs. To be known for their zeal in this cause. They sought to show their zeal by making converts, and by inducing others also to conform to those customs. Paul here refers, doubtless, to the Jewish teachers, and he says that their main object was to evince their zeal in the observance of rites and ceremonies. ¶ *They constrain you.* You who are Gentiles. They insist on circumcision as indispensable to salvation. ¶ *Only lest they should suffer persecution.* It is not from any true love for the cause of religion. It is, that they may avoid persecution from the Jews. If they should renounce the doctrine which taught that circumcision was indispensable, they would be exposed to the rage of the Jews, and would suffer persecution. Rather than do this, they make a show of great zeal in inducing others to be circumcised. ¶ *For the cross of Christ.* From attachment to the cause of a crucified Saviour. If they insisted on entire dependence on the merits of his blood, and renounced all dependence on rites and ceremonies, they would suffer persecution. This verse shows the true cause of the zeal which the Judaizing teachers evinced. It was the fear of persecution. It was the want of independence and boldness in maintaining the doctrine that men were to be saved only by the merits of the Lord Jesus. By attempting to

blend together the doctrines of Judaism and Christianity; by maintaining that the observance of the Jewish rites was necessary, and yet that Jesus was the Messiah, they endeavoured to keep in with both parties; and thus to escape the opposition of the Jews. It was an unhallowed compromise. It was an attempt to blend things together which could not be united. One *must* really displace the other. If men depended on the rites of Moses, they had no need of dependence on the Messiah; if they professed to depend on him, then to rely on any thing else was in fact to disown and reject him. Embracing the one system was in fact renouncing the other. Such is the argument of Paul; and such his solemn remonstrance against embracing any doctrine which would obscure the glory of simple dependence on the cross of Christ.

13. *For neither they themselves who are circumcised.* The Jewish teachers, or perhaps all Jews. It was true in general that the Jews did not wholly and entirely obey the law of Moses, but it is probable that the apostle refers particularly here to the Judaizing teachers in Galatia. ¶ *Keep the law.* The law of Moses, or the law of God. Paul's idea is, that if they were circumcised they brought themselves under obligation to keep the *whole* law of God; see Note, ch. v. 3. But *they* did not do it. (1.) No man *perfectly* observes the whole law of God. (2.) The Jewish nation as such were very far from doing it. (3.) It is probable that these persons did not *pretend* even to keep the whole law of Moses. Paul insists on it that if they were circumcised, and depended on that for salvation, they were under obligation to keep the whole law. But *they* did not. Probably they did not offer sacrifice, or join in any of the numerous observances of the Jewish nation, except some of the more prominent, such as circumcision. This, says Paul, is inconsistent in the highest degree; and they thus

who are circumcised keep the law ; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

*show their insincerity and hypocrisy. ¶ That they may glory in your flesh.* In having you as converts, and in persuading you to be circumcised, that they may show their zeal for the law, and thus escape persecution. The phrase "in your flesh" here, is equivalent to "in your circumcision;" making use of your circumcision to promote their own importance, and to save themselves from persecution.

14. *But God forbid.* Note, Rom. iii. 4. "For me it is not to glory except in the cross of Christ." The object of Paul here is evidently to place himself in contrast with the judaizing teachers, and to show his determined purpose to glory in nothing else but the cross of Christ. Well they knew that he had as much occasion for glorying in the things pertaining to the flesh, or in the observance of external rites and customs, as any of them. He had been circumcised. He had had all the advantages of accurate training in the knowledge of the Jewish law. He had entered on life with uncommon advantages. He had evinced a zeal that was not surpassed by any of them; and his life, so far as conformity to the religion in which he had been trained was concerned, was blameless; Phil. iii. 4—8. This must have been to a great extent known to the Galatians; and by placing his own conduct in strong contrast with that of the judaizing teachers, and showing that he had no ground of confidence in himself, he designed to bring back the minds of the Galatians to simple dependence on the cross. ¶ *That I should glory.* That I should boast; or that I should rely on any thing else. Others glory in their conformity to the laws of Moses; others in their zeal, or their talents, or their learning, or their orthodoxy; others in their wealth, or their accomplishments; others in their family alliances, and their birth; but the supreme boast and glorying of a Christian is in the cross of Christ. ¶ *In the*

14 But <sup>a</sup> God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>1</sup> by  
a Ph. 3.3,7,8. 1 or, *whereby.*

*cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* In Jesus the crucified Messiah. It is a subject of rejoicing and glorying that we have such a Saviour. The world looked upon him with contempt; and the cross was a stumblingblock to the Jew, and folly to the Greek. Notes, 1 Cor. i. 23. But to the Christian, that cross is the subject of glorying. It is so because, (1.) Of the love of him who suffered there; (2.) Of the purity and holiness of his character, for the innocent died there for the guilty; (3.) Of the honour there put on the law of God by his dying to maintain it unsullied; (4.) Of the reconciliation there made for sin, accomplishing what could be done by no other oblation, and by no power of man; (5.) Of the pardon there procured for the guilty; (6.) Of the fact that through it we become dead to the world, and are made alive to God; (7.) Of the support and consolation which goes from that cross to sustain us in trial; and, (8.) Of the fact that it procured for us admission into heaven, a title to the world of glory. All is glory around the cross. It was a glorious Saviour who died; it was glorious love that led him to die; it was a glorious object to redeem a world; and it is unspeakable glory to which he will raise lost and ruined sinners by his death. O who would not glory in such a Saviour! Compared with this, what trifles are all the objects in which men usually boast! And what a lesson is here furnished to the true Christian! Let us not boast of our wealth. It will soon leave us, or we shall be taken from it, and it can aid us little in the great matters that are before us. It will not ward off disease; it will not enable us to bear pain; it will not smooth the couch of death; it will not save the soul. Let us not glory in our strength, for it will soon fail; in our beauty, for we shall soon be undistinguished in the corruptions of the tomb; in our accomplishments, for they will not save

whom the world is crucified <sup>a</sup> unto me, and I unto the world.

15 For <sup>b</sup> in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a <sup>c</sup> new creature.

16 And as many as walk ac-  
<sup>a</sup> ch. 2.20.      <sup>b</sup> ch. 5.6.      <sup>c</sup> 2 Co. 5.17.

us ; in our learning, for it is not that by which we can be brought to heaven. But let us glory that we have for a Saviour the eternal Son of God—that glorious Being who was adored by the inhabitants of heaven ; who made the worlds ; who is pure, and lovely, and most holy ; and who has undertaken our cause and died to save us. I desire no higher honour than to be saved by the Son of God. It is the exaltation of my nature, and shows me more than any thing else its true dignity, that one so great and glorious sought my redemption. That cannot be an object of temporary value which he sought by coming from heaven, and if there is any object of real magnitude in this world, it is the soul which the eternal Son of God died to redeem. ¶ *By whom the world is crucified unto me, &c.* ; see Notes on ch. ii. 20.

15. *For in Christ Jesus.* In his religion ; see Note on ch. v. 6. ¶ *But a new creature.* The fact that a man is created anew, or born again, constitutes the real difference between him and other men. This is what Christ requires ; this is the distinction which he designs to make. It is not by conformity to certain rites and customs that a man is to be accepted ; it is not by elevated rank, or by wealth, or beauty, or blood ; it is not by the colour of the complexion ; but the grand inquiry is, whether a man is born again, and is in fact a new creature in Christ Jesus ; see Note on 2 Cor. v. 17, for an explanation of the phrase “ a new creature.”

16. *And as many as walk.* As many as *live*, for so the word *walk* is used in the Scriptures. *According to this rule.* Gr. This canon ; see the word explained in the Notes on 2 Cor. x. 13. ¶ *Peace be on them ;* see Note, Rom. xv. 33. ¶ *And upon the Israel of God.* The true church of

God ; all who are his true worshippers ; see Notes on Rom. ii. 28, 29 ; ix. 6.

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me : for <sup>e</sup> I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>d</sup> Ps. 125.5.

<sup>e</sup> Col. 1.24.

God ; all who are his true worshippers ; see Notes on Rom. ii. 28, 29 ; ix. 6.

17. *From henceforth.* For the remaining time ; that is, during the remainder of my life. ¶ *Let no man trouble me.* This implies that he had had trouble of some kind, and he earnestly desires that he may have no more. What particular trouble he here refers to, is not certainly known, and commentators have not been agreed. It seems to me that the connection requires us to understand it of the molestation which he had in regard to his call to the apostolic office, and his authority to explain and defend the religion of the Redeemer. This had been one principal subject of this epistle. His authority had been called in question. He had felt it necessary to go into a vindication of it. His instructions had been departed from on the ground that he was not one of the original apostles, and that he differed from others ; see ch. i. 11. Hence all the anxiety and trouble which he had had in regard to their departure from the doctrines which he had taught them. He closes the whole subject of the epistle by this tender and affecting language, the sense of which has been well expressed by Crellius : “ I have shown my apostolic authority, and proved that I am commissioned by the Lord Jesus. I have stated and vindicated the great doctrine of justification by faith, and shown that the Mosaic law is not necessarily binding. On these points may I have no more trouble. I have enough for my nature to bear of other kinds. I bear in my body the impressive proofs that I am an apostle, and the sufferings that require all my fortitude to sustain them. These marks, received in the service of the Lord Jesus, and so strongly resembling those which he himself received, prove

18 Brethren, the <sup>a</sup> grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

that I am truly engaged in his cause, and am commissioned by him. These wounds and sorrows are so many, that I have need of the kindness and prayers of Christians rather than to be compelled to vindicate myself, and to rebuke them for their own wanderings." ¶ *For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.* The word here rendered "marks" (*στίγματα*), means properly the marks or brands which are pricked or burnt in upon the body. So slaves were sometimes branded by their masters to prevent their escape; and so devotees to an idol god sometimes caused to be impressed on themselves the name or image of the divinity which they adored. Herodotus (ii. 113) mentions a temple of Hercules in Egypt, in which if any slave took refuge, and had the sacred brands or marks impressed on him (*στίγματα*), he thereby devoted himself to the god, and it was not lawful for any one to injure him. Many have supposed that Paul here says, in allusion to such a custom, that he had the name of the Redeemer impressed on his body, and that he regarded himself as devoted to him and his cause. It seems to me that by these *marks* or brands he refers to the *weals* which he had received in his body; the marks of stripes and sufferings which he endured in the service of the Redeemer. Comp. 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25. He had repeatedly been scourged. He bore the marks of that on his person now. They were the evidences that he was devoted to the Saviour. He had received them in his cause; and they were the proofs that he belonged to the Lord Jesus. He had suffered for him, and had suffered much. Having thus suffered, and having thus the evidence that he belonged to the Saviour, and having by his sufferings given ample proof of that to others, he asks to be freed from further molestation. Some had in their body the marks of circumcision, the evidence that they

Unto the Galatians, written from Rome.

<sup>a</sup> 2 Ti. 4.22; Phil. 8.25.

were disciples of the law of Moses; others had perhaps in their persons the image and name of an idol to which they were devoted; but the marks which *he* bore were the *weals* which he had received by being again and again whipped publicly in the cause of the Redeemer. To that Redeemer, therefore, he felt himself united, and from that attachment he would not allow himself to be diverted. How often has an old soldier shown his scars with pride and exultation as a proof of his attachment to his country! Numerous scars; the loss of an arm, an eye, or a leg, are thus the much valued and vaunted pledges of attachment to liberty, and a passport to the confidence of every man who loves his country. "I prize this wound," said Lafayette, when struck in the foot by a musket ball at Germantown, "as among the most valued of my honours." So Paul felt in regard to the scourges which he had received in the cause of the Lord Jesus. They were his boast and his glory; the pledge that he had been engaged in the cause of the Saviour, and a passport to all who loved the Son of God. Christians now are not subjected to such stripes and scourgings. But let us have *some* marks of our attachment to the Lord Jesus. By a holy life; by self-denial; by subdued animal affections; by zeal in the cause of truth; by an imitation of the Lord Jesus; and by the marks of suffering in our body, if we should be called to it, let us have *some* evidence that we are his, and be able to say, when we look on death and eternity, "we bear with us the evidence that we belong to the Son of God." To us that will be of more value than any ribbon or star indicating elevated rank; more valuable than a ducal coronet; more valuable than the brightest jewel that ever sparkled on the brow of royalty.

18. *Brethren, the grace, &c.*; see Note, Rom. xvi. 20.